

INTERNATIONAL

# TALKING MACHINE REVIEWS 85

*John Cornach*

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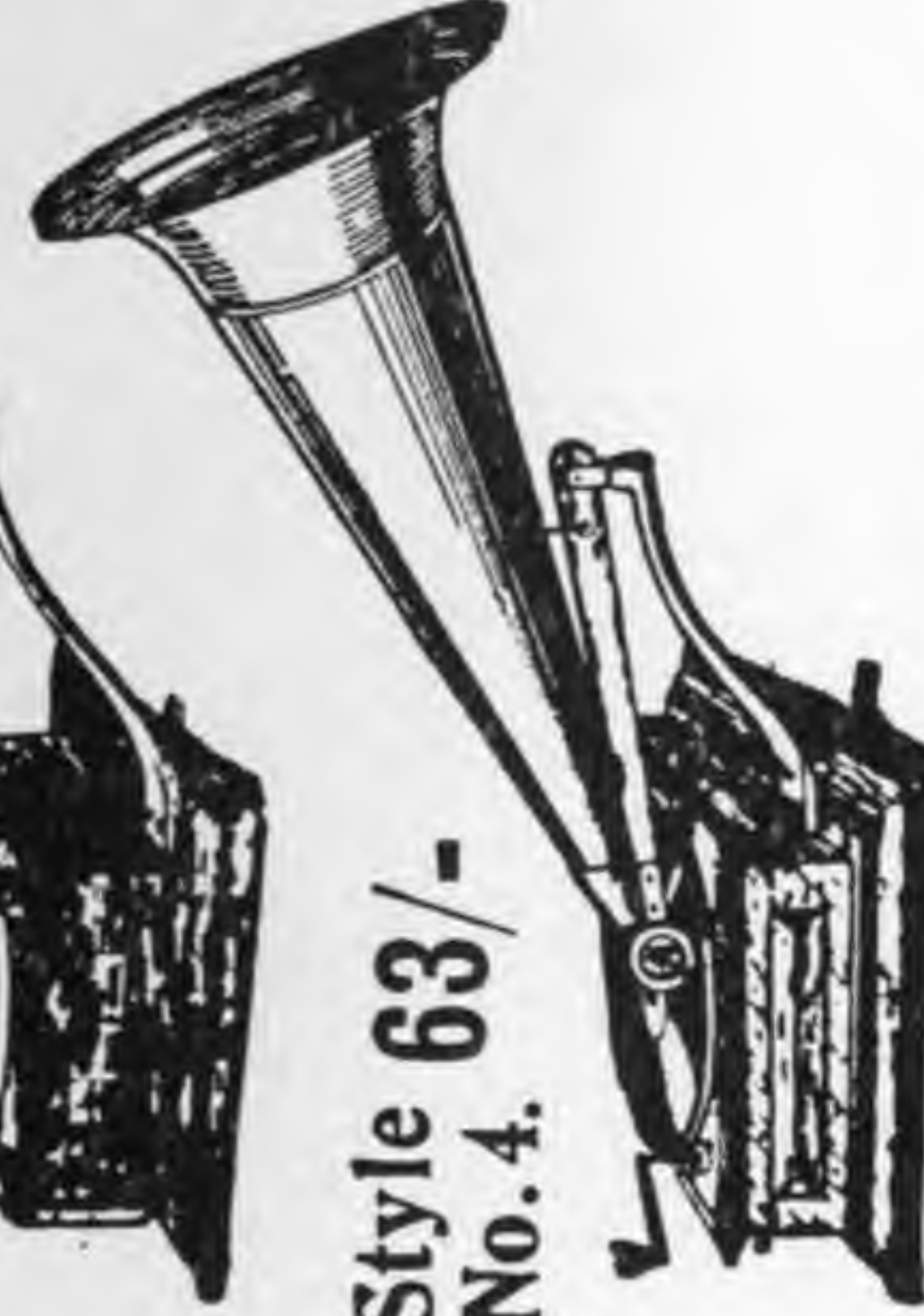
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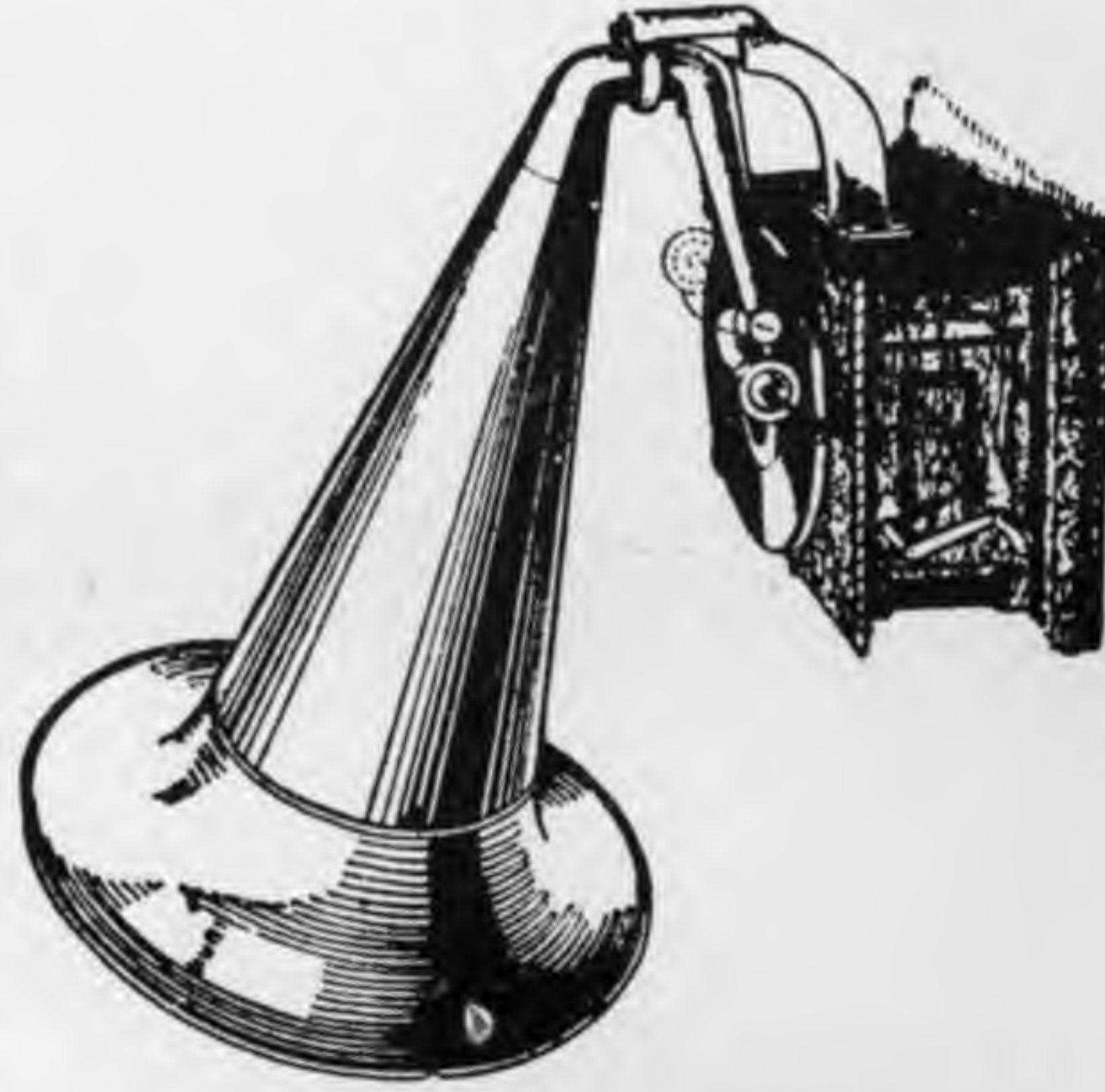
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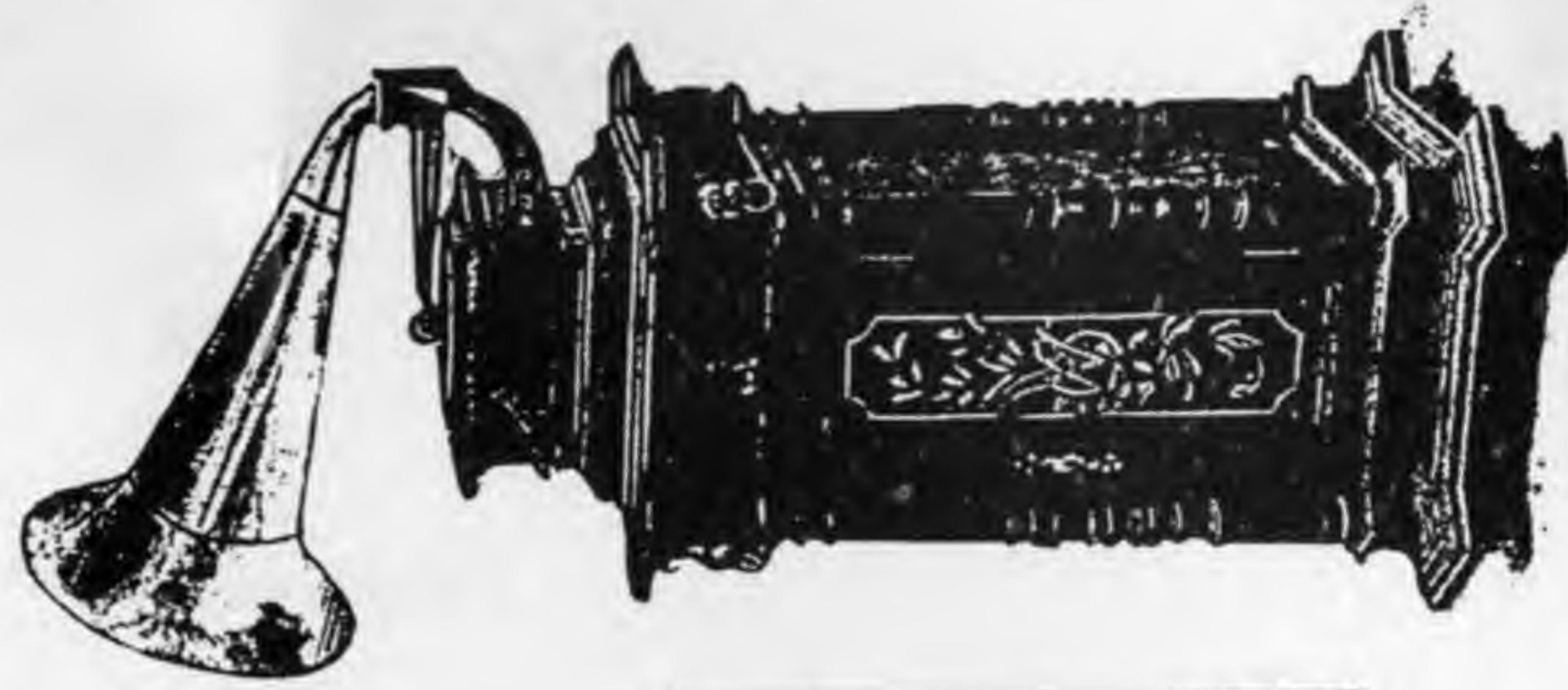


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## Nipper's Bit

**B**y the time that you receive this copy, for which delays belated apologies - this was due to a nervous breakdown in the TMR computer, and before anyone shouts "back ups" I should add that I was making back ups of the mailing list when the worst happened. It also meant that my Christmas card list was also inaccessible from late November to early January, so if you sent us a card and we didn't send you one - please don't delete us from your list and accept this greeting for the new year.

We in the UK will have got used to the fact that the cost of postage has risen again for inland and overseas mail. The UK and EU rise is only one penny per issue, but some overseas amounts are quite hefty. This cost will unfortunately have to be passed on to those subscribers affected. (Why can't they announce them at least three months in advance?). Once the figures are known Master and I will count the needles in the tin, divide the total by the number of broken records in the shed, add the last catalogue number used by Westport and arrive at an equitable result. Watch this space for more depressing news.

We have some extended operatic coverage in this issue, there are reviews of two interesting cassettes, two double CDs of Amelita Galli Curci, the first part of a John McCormack chronology, and a review by Master of an important new biography of Adelina Patti from the pen of John F Cone.

Somewhere back in these columns we noted a phenomenon dubbed at that time 'laser rot' as a potential long term problem with CDs. Many in the industry were quick to deny the existence of the problem, and certainly the evidence of our own collection has been to negate any suggestion of a medium term problem. There are far more worrying occurrences elsewhere of cylinder rot fungus, and an unnamed mould growth on many shellac discs stored in damp or humid conditions. But now we read of a report in *New Scientist* (if Master's memory is to be relied upon, this was the source of the first reports) that indeed compact discs made for Philips/Polydor - and identified by the minute wording to be found in the centre of the discs as "Made in the UK for PdO".

Philips are reported as to not fully understand the problem but a spokesman said that it was believed that sulphur in the air was eating away at the nitro-cellulose lacquer coating and that they have switched to an acrylic coating. Initially it was thought - or hoped by Master and I - that the problem was confined to CD singles packaged in paper sleeves containing a high sulphur content, however the 'rot' has been discovered on full length CDs packed in the conventional plastic box.

Apparently the Philips plant in Blackburn, Lancashire, is unique in its use of silver coatings beneath a nitro-cellular layer, other manufacturers reportedly using aluminium. Anyone having cause to suspect a problem in their CDs from PdO can contact a freephone number 0800 387063.

To our readers in The Netherlands we will have missed you at the Vlaardingen fair, we have decided not to risk the storms which prevented us arriving last January, and kept us on the ferry outside Vlissingen Harbour for six hours. See you in the Autumn.

Nipper.

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Adelina Patti

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# Junkshoppers' Column

## Arthur Badrock

A few loose ends to tidy up first:

### *Poor Isidor*

In issue 79 I wrote about the two titles recorded by the pianist Isidor Goodman for the Crystalate Company which were not issued, but a white label copy he had given to his grandmother turned up in Norfolk.

Mike Sutcliffe the Australian discographer has written to tell me that Moses Isidore Goodman was born in Capetown, South Africa on May 27th 1909, which means he was 17 when he went into the Crystalate studios.

His family moved to the UK in 1921 and he apparently moved to Australia sometime in the 1930s, recording extensively on Columbia, Diaphon, Platavox and other labels. There is a biography written by his widow.

### *Phonycord Part 2 - The English label - issue 83.*

In order to make sense of the introductory theories and and the footnote please delete the P prefix to the 'matrix' numbers to P106 and the first side of P105.

A lot of additional information has come in, mainly on the German label. Possibly we will do a listing of all the German and English issues known to us as a separate booklet if there is sufficient interest.

### *American Masters on Crystalate Mini-Discs, issue 84*

Gary Scott of Seaham, Co. Durham has found another Mimosa with Plaza material on it and has extended our AO control series by 1 to AO.13. The record is:

AO.13 *I Ain't Got Nobody.* Mimosa Dance orchestra

Gary also sent me a tape of the record and I can confirm that it is a shortened version of Plaza matrix 7458 recorded by the California Ramblers on August 12th 1927. Adrian Rollini is present and there is a nice solo by Bobby Davis on alto. The Mimosa ends immediately after Ed Kirkeby's vocal.

Interestingly it now appears that English Vocalion were doing the same thing. Steven Walker gave me the following 5.3/8" Little Marvel, the record produced by Vocalion for sale in Woolworth's:

#### **Little Marvel unnumbered.**

F284	<i>Tea For Two</i>	(Dance)
X-C-5135	<i>Stephanie Gavotte</i>	(Bell Solo).

The first side starts part way through a non-vocal version of *Tea For Two* and continues to the end. The band and the recording sound American and I would guess it is the Ben Bernie version from Vocalion 14901, recorded about October 1924 and issued here on Vocalion X.9549. If anyone can supply me with a tape of the Bernie version

we could settle this particular problem. I have had a lot of Little Marvels through my hands and this is the only one I know which appears to be an American recording.

### *A missing Cameo session*

The following three titles which possibly come from the same session, are missing from the standard reference books. I have recently heard the third side which features two trumpet solos with a trombone solo in between and a violin behind the vocal. The recordings date from May 1929.

- |       |                              |    |         |
|-------|------------------------------|----|---------|
| 3842a | <i>Will You? Won't You?</i>  | vc | Ca 9171 |
|       | The Lumberjacks.             |    |         |
| 3843a | <i>We Can't Live On Love</i> | vc | Ca 9166 |
|       | Ernest Carl's Dance Orch.    |    |         |
| 3844c | <i>Till You Came Along</i>   | vc | Rom 970 |
|       | The Caroliners.              |    |         |

All three names were used as pseudonyms for a variety of bands. 3845-3847 are all by Carson Robison. I have no details of 3840/1. Does anybody have any views on the above three sides? It doesn't sound like a Bob Haring session.





## More about: HMV JG series...

from Peter Adamson,

Further to John Goslin's letter in TMR 84 p2466. If you look in *WERM* (Clough and Cuming. *World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music*), you will find convenient tables of catalogue prefix letters for all the major companies. It is clear that HMV's allocation of prefix letters is almost randomly scattered around the alphabet, especially compared with Columbia's fairly regular structure.

Under the heading "British Made Private Issues" appear the combinations JG, GS, HB for 12" discs, and the corresponding JH, GR, HA for 10" discs, together with GSC which covers both sides.

Amongst the undoubtedly very private issues, there are some quite famous discs: an album of Maggie Teyte singing songs by Berlioz, Debussy and Duparc (JG 177 - 180), made for Rimington, Van Wyck of the USA. (Later RVW recordings were made by Decca.)

As an utter contrast, JG 1 (matrix numbers TPX30-1 and TPX31-1) provides recitations by A Neave Brayshaw (presumably his own poetry) - my copy is obligingly signed, and dated 28.iii.1935. Master William Bell sings rather grown-up love songs by Handel, Quilter etc on JG 4 (mx TPX458-1 and TPX459-1), and JGS 7 (a single sided disc) carries a selection of 17th century songs about chemistry (of all things), performed by students of St Andrews University Choir on 22 November 1935 (TPX479-1).

I suppose the most extensive use of the JG series must have been for Talking Books for the Blind. An early reference to these is made in *The Gramophone* for November 1935 (pp 252 - 3), with an article by Percy Wilson, which starts: "This month the issue of Talking Books for the Blind begins."

These discs play at 24rpm, and have a proper HMV label on one side (with yellow label), and a blank black label on the reverse carrying a serial number in both a visual pattern and in braille. (However I do have one example that plays at 33  $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm.) The 24 rpm discs persisted for a long time - I have JG 14402 published in 1960.

Altogether, I would guess that HMV used that section of the alphabet to hand when the series was started - but I can quite understand John Goslin's bias towards the happy idea of JG being someone's initials!

St Andrews, Scotland.

## John Goslin and Shakespeare's set.

from the Editor:

In answer to John Goslin's request for information regarding his recording of an extract from *'The Merry Wives of Windsor'* on Oriole. I have a copy of the Oriole July 1954 catalogue, from which I quote:

### SPECIAL FEATURES

**SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE SERIES.** *The renowned artistry of the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival Company in vital and famous scenes of the immortal plays of William Shakespeare.*

The Merry Wives of Windsor	~ ~	SM.1, SM.2, SM.3
The Tempest	~ ~ ~ ~	SM.4, SM.5, SM.6
Richard II	~ ~ ~ ~	SM.7, SM.8, SM.9, SM.10

12 in. records 11s. 5d. each, including P. Tax.

No casts or further details are given. Quite clearly they were only extracts, and I do not know if Oriole later transferred them to Lp as they did with another well known set in this Special Features list - *'The Sounds of Time'*. Although nothing is shown of these, Oriole had at the time of the catalogue released Lps, both under their own label as well as Allegro and Mercury.

There was another, five record set available, *'Memories of ITMA'*, can anyone tell me, was this ever released on Lp?.

## Letters

from Jack Bittesby,

The line up of Pete Mandell's January 1930 band included a harpist whose name seems never to have been traced. Victory 209 has mx.889 (22nd March 1930) *You Baby Me - I'll Baby You*. ft, coupled with mx.839 (February 1939) Jenny Jones, harp solo by Chas. Leonard. Does this provide the answer?

I have an Eclipse, Blue label, SC43, *Dixieland Pt.1 & Pt.2*, by Syd Peters & His Southern Caroline Band. Can you please tell me whom it is by, is it Jay Wilbur as JW622-2 and JW623-2 appear as the matrix numbers? When did Eclipse change label colours, Red/Blue and catalogue series numbers only on the red labels, to SC on the blue labels. Presumably they were all priced at 6d each as I have never seen any other price on their bags.  
London.

Arthur Badrock replies:

Answer to query number one:

No, I don't think so. The fact that these two recordings are back to back is just a coincidence. Charles Leonard recorded two titles for Crystalate on 23rd January, the other being *'My Lodging Is On The Cold Ground'* -unissued. He would seem to be a 'straight' harpist which makes him a less likely candidate than, for example, Mario Lorenzi - and I'm not suggesting it's him!

Answer to your second question (Eclipse):

The Syd Peters coupling was recorded on the 22nd March 1932 and the only solid fact is that John Thorne was the vocalist. The Crystalate recording file gives the same artist credit as the label, which doesn't help as it was their habit to put the pseudonym in the file instead of the artist's real name, so unless there was a real Syd Peters this could have been a Jay Wilbur coupling. Interesting to note that according to the file the only other recordings that day were by George Crowther, (the comedian in the velvet coat), who had thirteen records issued on Piccadilly and the celebrated Music Hall artist Kate Carney who would have been about 62 at the time.

The blue Eclipse SC series did not follow on from the red, the two series being issued at roughly the same time. The SC series was meant to indicate 'Standard Crystalate' series, not 'Sacred' as some people think.

As regards the price, the supplements I have cover the period from 1931 to 1935 and the price was constant at 6d.

AB

Letters are continued on page 2479



# Continental Forum

## Ralph Harvey

In this issue Ralph looks not so much backwards at the technologies of the past, the main interest of most of TMR readers, but in keeping with TMR tradition of occasionally reviewing contemporary technologies in as much as they are of interest to the lover of nostalgic sounds. Satellite News of Vision and Sound; Earthbound Radio on Medium and Long Waves; Parlophone revisited; Around the Moulin Rouge Fifties Style - a menu with something for everyone!

Proud owners of a France Telecom 2B (F.T.2.B.) 5 degrees West dish, with decoder, [Nipper and I needed a decoder to understand the jargon! So we went and bought a copy of the magazine *What Satellite TV*, of all the magazines on the market it seems to be the best for the uninitiated who wants to avoid Sky TV but yet find out what else is there. -Ed.] continue to be delighted by programmes on the cultural network ARTE (12.606V) which receives considerable financial assistance from both the German and French governments, though not without opposition from certain extremely vocal politicians. French speaking viewers within the range of the F.T.2.B. satellite wish ARTE nothing but well. Bravo ARTE for the recent documentary on Glenn Miller, though we should have preferred subtitles rather than simultaneous translation which for bilinguals made it difficult to hear both English and French voices. [Hear, hear! All broadcasters please note. -Ed.] As a matter of information rather than recommendation, RTL (Luxembourg TV in French language) and T'1' Monte Carlo (TMC also in French) have been added to this satellite recently. On the radio side, FM Classique, a model of its kind, continues to flourish, but Radio Montmartre had ceased transmission on France Telecom 2.B. though it is said to be moving to the Astra Satellite [home of Sky TV etc.]. There are indeed far more satellite 'punters' on Astra 19.2 degrees East than on the French language Telecom 2B. Astra offers continental freaks a fine range of German TV programmes which I find are set out in the Monthly Satellite Times as well as Swedish and German channels, French language Europe 1 and RTL are totally interference free, by comparison with their long-wave frequencies. However the real discovery here is a Swiss-German language (also *'Schwyzer-deutsch'*) radio station called Radio Eviva, based in Zurich. Eviva is a delight to lovers of Swiss folk music, especially the evening sessions from 7 to 11 pm. (UK time) from Tuesday to Saturday incl. Part of this programme is charmingly called *Enzian* ('Gentian') - in French *'Suze'*. On Sunday mornings between 9 and 11 am there is a light and light-classical selection of recordings entitled *Klassischer Blumenstrauß* (Classical Bouquet), but nothing 'heavy'. Good to hear the South of the Alps suite

of Ernst Fischer recently, together with marches, waltzes and polkas by Bohemian minor masters dating from the turn of this century, Komzak (which one of many?), Vejvoda and others. A letter in English to Radio Eviva, Kreuzstrasse 26, Postfach 8032, Zurich, Switzerland, secures a programme schedule. Swiss Radio International with its multi-lingual services now may also be heard on Astra. Their new brochure may be had from SRI, PO Box CH 3000, Berne 15.

Since moving house from Chichester to Littlehampton, we now receive Radio Bleue from the Lille transmitter [see my piece below for more details of our favourite radio station -Ed.]. but the other morning we tuned into France Inter on our recently restored 1952 valve radio to find Charles Trenet "live" in the studio as they say in today's media French. It was the day (8 November 1993) that Studio 102 in Radio France was renamed Studio Charles Trenet. The octogenarian in splendid form, sang unaccompanied at one time (*Ou sant-ils donc?*) in perfect tune and then punned away on his sobriquet, *Le Fou Chantant* (The Singing Fool, after Jolson) transforming it with customary modesty and panache into *Le Fou sans temps*, - (The Timeless Jester); Merci Monsieur Trenet.

Every shellac collector must be aware of that stalwart of the Parlophone -Odeon catalogues of the 1930's, known as the Orchestra Mascotte in the English -speaking world, as the Wiener-Boheme Orchester in Germany, its country of origin, and known in France as the Grand Orchestre Bohemien. Radio Bleue through ILD Records have just begun a series of light- music reissues under the title: Pierre-Marcel Ondher presents The Jewels of Light Music - Das Wiener - Boheme Orchester - Le Grand Orchestre Bohemien. This initiative deserves every possible support from readers of magazines such as ours. At present we not able to say whether or not the series will be imported into the UK, so we will give ILD's address, in case of difficulty in obtaining the record, [catalogue number ILD642133]. - I.L.D., 57, rue Escudier, 92100 Boulogne, France. (That is Boulogne Billancourt, - not 'Sur Mer' so beloved of day trippers) telephone from UK 010.331.46.03.40.68

The Orchestra Mascotte, we'll keep to the English version of the name, was created in Berlin by the Carl Lindström Company (Odeon) as a house orchestra. Prior to the arrival of the violinist and genial arranger Leonid Golcman, better known as Dajos Bela, it was like any other salon orchestra. It was Dajos who gave it its almost surreal character. An imaginary orchestra rather than a real one. First its rhythm was almost exclusively 3/4 drawing its repertoire internationally, from composers who otherwise may well not have found their way to our record catalogues. Its instrumentation used the recognized orchestral instruments sparingly, concentrating upon such as the Hammond Organ, accordeon, musical saw, guitars Spanish and Hawaiian, mandolins, bells and bird-warblers, but varying in each recording according to which instrumentalists, let's not forget the xylophone, were available on any particular day. Arrangements were made and recorded, often within a matter of hours. The recording technique which gave equal value to each instrument was called 'Uni-Sono', and I for one would be grateful to any reader who could explain to me clearly how this primitive form of mixing worked.

The ILD "Orchestre Mascotte" consists of 20 tracks selected by Pierre-Marcel and documented by a team of



experts: Gilbert Pilon, André-Daniel Gaillard (formerly of Polydor France) and Pierre Debièvre. The first 16 tracks come under four headings: Two titles most requested by listeners to Radio Bleue (*Daisy Bell* and *The Midnight Waltz*); Famous 'little-knowns'; French 'Successes' and 'Great Composers'. Tracks 17 to 20 are termed 'sosies' or 'sound-alikes' of the Orchestra Mascotte from French Columbia and German Imperial under the names of the Columbia Novelty Orchestra, the Orchestre Columbia and Kurt Engel's Solisten-Parade. As far as we are able to ascertain all but three of the Orchestra Mascotte titles were issued on Parlophone UK, R series (dark blue labels) and/or F series (magenta labels) between 1930 and 1937. All have German matrix numbers -Be for Berlin. What is stunning about this CD is the quality of transfer from shellac, I guess it is the work of Lionel Risler and associates [Studio Sofreson, rue Pigalle, Paris. -Ed.], they are not credited which I think is scandalous. The intriguing Orchestra Mascotte disappeared from the New Issue supplements by the end of the 1930's; Pierre-Marcel's collection enables this unique phenomenon to live again!

Some twenty years after the Orchestra Mascotte had been recording in Berlin, Paris was able to boast a number of light orchestras having conductors comparable with our George Melachrino, Ronald Binge and Sidney Torch. Encompassing the talents of all three was Paul Bonneau who shares an EMI France double album with the Raymond St Paul Chorus and sopranos Janine Micheau and Mathe Altery: *Moulin Rouge - Valses et Romances de Paris*. The connection of some of this music with the cafe-concert in the Place Blanche is tenuous to say the least, but the Moulin makes a delightful colour illustration for the booklet which is in French and English, and contains a useful essay on the Parisian Waltz by Benoit Deteurthe. Composers Charles Lecoq, Auguste Bosc, Georges Auric, Oscar Straus, Reynaldo Hahn, Emile Waldteufel, Francis Lopez and many more are represented, eight tracks are entirely orchestral. The performances are reminiscent of Chantilly Cream, Frou-Frou and November gaslight in Pigalle, a delight to all whose imaginations are capable of rubbing shoulders and even dancing with Paris cafe society of the gay eighteen nineties. *Moulin Rouge* is distributed by EMI Classics (UK) with a sticker, "Two for the price of one", the one being the French price at around £16.50 (CZS 767875-2). R.H.

Francophile readers may remember that we covered in depth the Radio France station Radio Bleue. The details of their 1994 winter schedules are now to hand and brief details of particularly interesting programmes are given below for the benefit of those lucky enough to live within reception distance of the northern medium wave French transmitters. (All times given below are French, normally one hour ahead of UK time).

Saturdays: 07:00 - 09:30 *Nos disques sont les vôtres*; presented by Ivan-Claude Perey. (Two breaks in this programme for news at 07:30 and a review of the papers at 08:30). 17:00 - 18:00 *Accordéon sans frontières*; for accordion fans, by Yves Desautard. Sundays: Ivan-Claude Perey again presents his requests programme (details as Saturdays). 12:00 - 13:00 *Divertissement sur mesure* by our friend Pierre-Marcel Ondher is a programme of light music often featuring vintage recordings. Michel Gosselin broadcasts at 17:00

for an hour of *Nouvelle Vogue*, a programme of fifties and sixties popular (not rock) music.

Weekdays have much to interest the average TMR listener scattered throughout the schedules of the usual programmes, so you will have to dip in and try it, but worthy of especial mention are the following programmes. 10:05 - 11:00, on Mondays M. Christian Plume the well known expert presents *L'encyclopédie de la chanson française*. Operetta fans are catered for on Tuesdays by Claude Dufresne in *Rue de L'opérette*. Wednesday's presenter of this nostalgic slot is Jean-Louis Beaucarnot (*Notre mémoire a cent ans*). Thursdays and the slot is filled by Marc Dumont who always provides some rarities in his *Chansons témoins*. Michel Lis's presentation on Friday between 10:05 and 11:00 is always worth listening to, he caters for all types of collectors but especially the record collector. *Violons dingues* is the title of his programme - literally translated this is "*Daft Violins*"! But I promise you would enjoy an hour of these 'idiot collectors' be they record collectors, phonograph collectors, post card collectors, the records are well worth listening to.

Every afternoon at 15:00 comes for me a highlight of the days programming. Jacques Perciot who is a passionate fan of the older record and chanson presents *Jacq'a dit*. There are breaks in his programme at 15:15 and 16:00, but he continues through to 17:00, and includes at 16:30 a daily series by Christian Plume "*Les grands moments de la chanson*". A recent high-light was a whole programme dedicated to and including an at length interview with Sascha Distel.

Available now for the first time, since November 1993, is a monthly magazine giving full details of the programmes and articles by the presenters, "*Radio Bleue Magazine*" is available by post within the EU for 207 FF per annum (11 issues) from Radio Bleue Magazine - Service abonnement, 23 rue des Apennins, 75017 Paris, France.

The following frequencies for Radio-France carry Radio Bleue (07:00 - 19:00 French time) and can be received in various parts of the South, South East and Southern Midlands of England as far north as Coventry, (although of course being good old fashioned medium wave, please allow for variable reception conditions and interference from modern electronic equipment such as TV and VDU screens, especially if you listen-in at home on a transistor rather than valve set), 1377 KHz / 218 metres (Lille), 711 KHz / 422 metres (Rennes).

Another channel from Radio-France is the well known 'flag ship' France Inter which as well as the domestic FM frequencies can be heard on 1852 metres Long Wave, and various short wave frequencies, details of this and Radio France International programmes, which also include some English language programmes, can be had by writing to Radio France International, Maison de Radio France, 116, avenue du President Kennedy, 75016 Paris, France. Programmes of especial interest on France Inter include J-C Averty's continuing series '*Les cingles du music-hall*', Sundays at 16:00 to 17:00 local (French) time. JWB.





# Letters (continued from page 2476)

from Charles A Hooey,

I am working closely with Mr Ewen Langford, who is a son of the late British soprano, Caroline Hatchard in an effort to bring her accomplishments and recordings to the attention of music-lovers of today. Ewen is sending me much material from his family archives and I am endeavouring to write her biography. To do this we feel we must hear and evaluate every one of Caroline's recordings. She made a few records for the Pathé Company in 1909, as well as some for HMV in 1910-12, and others in the early 1920s for Vocalion. we have managed to obtain the HMV Tales of Hoffmann aria and the Vocalion releases, but the Pathés continue to elude us. Oddly enough, Caroline herself owned a set of of these discs but handed them over for salvage in the War effort in the early 1940s.

Could any of your readers help us locate these Pathé discs. Although we do not actually need to acquire the discs as good tape copies would suffice. The following is a list of the Pathé discs in question:

- 78531 I wish I were a tiny bird (Lohr)
- 78532 A bowl of roses (Clarke)
- 78533 A birthday song (Clarke)
- 78534 The Arcadians: The pipes of Pan  
(Monckton & Talbot)
- 78535 The Arcadians: Light is my heart
- 78536 Goodbye (Tosti) [We do have this on tape, only]
- 79067 Patience: Love is a plaintive song  
(Gilbert & Sullivan)
- 79068 Pirates of Penzance: Poor wandering one  
(Gilbert & Sullivan)
- 79069 Orpheus with his lute (Sullivan)
- 79069 The Mikado: The sun whose rays  
(Gilbert & Sullivan)

Matrix information would also be most welcome.

I hope that TMR readers can help us on this major hurdle on our project. Of course I will provide whatever funds are needed to produce the tape copies, within reason. Thank you all.

Charles A Hooey, 730 Minto Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3G 2R4

from M. Daniel Leborgne:

Effectuant des recherches sur la chanteuse Patricia Kaas, je me permet de vous ecrire afin de savoir si l'on peut, aupres des votre services, obtenir des copies d'articles que vous avez consacres a cette chanteuse.

Recherche tout sur Patricia Kaas. France et Etranger. LP, EP, SP, Maxi, Promo, K7, K7 single, CD, Mini CD, CD single, Affiches, Affichettes, Billets, Photos, Cartes Postales, Revues, Journaux, Partitions, Enregistrements Radio, Enregistrements TV, etc etc. Faire offre raisonnable.

Daniel Leborgne, 14 rue des Eglantiers, 60800 Crepy en Valois, France.

from Bill Klinger:

On various cylinder box end labels from France there appears the legend 'Musica C.D. Paris'. Was this a Trade Mark, do these have any connection with Georges Dutreih, the cylinders are of the gold moulded type, which I guess would put them between 1902 and 1907. Does this indicate *Cylindre Dutreih*, as opposed to

*Disque Dutreih*. The mark has also been found on *Cylindres Artistique*. Does anyone know how this relates to the 'Musica G.D.' legend found on the labels of German pressed discs of the Gramophone Co. 'dog-less gramophone' trademark of the first World War, and similar USA pressings with 'Opera Disc Musica'?

[This question was posed to the various members of the TMR team and the following is a composite answer of all their inputs, as refined by Frank Andrews. However if any one has any more to add, we should be pleased to consider it, especially if you have any documentary evidence. -Ed.]

Various discs were handled by Musica G.D. for Deutsche Grammophon and Polyphon Musikwerke and the letters G.D. appear on them, (not D.G. as reported elsewhere). Both Dutreih cylinders and Deutsche Grammophon and Polyphon Musikwerke discs carry G.D., however it is coincidental, there is no connection.

Michael Kinnear states that he once knew what G.D. stood for but has now forgotten the German word beginning with the 'D'.

The 'G' stands for *Gessellschaft* and the 'D' word is a qualifying status word which indicates the type of company it was, for example a servicing or holding company. So the company name, which appears on Operaphone Disc records, Hindenberg Records, Scandinavian Polyphon records is '*Musica G(essellschaft) D(... ..)*'. I think that any cylinder with the marking G.D. will be connected with Georges Dutreih, and that any marked D.G. will not be connected to Deutsches Grammophon nor with Poly Musikwerke's 'Musica G.D.' export concessionaires.

Frank Andrews.

[At the time of writing that reply Frank had just returned from a spell of intensive care in hospital, apparently with pneumonia. On behalf of all TMR readers around the world, I would wish Frank, and his wife, his speedy and complete recovery. -Ed.]

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# Book review

by John W Booth.

## ADELINA PATTI: QUEEN OF HEARTS

by John F Cone.

With 524pp and a total of 154 illustrations,

(USA publication by Amadeus Press)

published in the UK and Europe by Scolar Press  
ISBN 0-931340-60-8

THERE HAVE BEEN many famous operatic divas - or 'canaries' - but none so famous (or infamous) as Adelina Patti. Her career preceded Dame Nellie Melba and followed Jenny Lind's, she said of Patti - "There is only one Niagra; and there is only one Patti". Melba's popular following was enhanced by gramophone recordings whilst she was at the height of her prowess; Patti's recordings were made when her professional appearances were less frequent - she was in her sixties - and the gramophone was still considered by many a novelty. Nevertheless these early recordings from 1905 and 1906 still excite and captivate anyone who has heard them with their true Italian Bel Canto style. This was the style taught by Patti's parents and her early 'manager' (although truth to tell his real role was never defined by a title) and brother-in-law Maurice Strackosch.

Adelina Patti was born 1843 in Madrid, but never considered herself Spanish, her parents being touring Italian opera stars of their time. By the time she was three the family had emigrated to New York and were involved in the Italian opera there. Adelina gave her first public performance at the age of eight in New York, her last farewell performance was sixty-three years later in the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Between these two events her life and career took her the length and breadth of America - North and South - to nearly every major town in the British Isles and Ireland, throughout Europe, in fact anywhere there was an opera house or promoter who could afford her fees. Her tours in those days of land and sea based travel were phenomenal undertakings in themselves requiring a substantial entourage.

Her private life was full of admirers from the beginning of her career to the end. Love spurned, love denied, a Catholic marriage in 1868 Clapham to a French aristocrat and courtier much older than herself; a scandalous affair and living with a married French operatic tenor, Nicolini. Buying and improving a property - she called it a castle - and estate as their home at Craig-y-Nos in South Wales. Divorce from the Marquis and marriage in the local Welsh Protestant church to the by now divorced Nicolini. Scores of servants, high society entertained, including royalty, the building of a private theatre in the castle grounds. All the trappings of the latest inventions and the best of everything that was available in Victorian Britain. Private railway carriages and a virtually personal railway station to serve her estate.

Her every doings were the subject of newspaper reports and speculation. Nicolini died in Pau southern France almost ignored by her. Very soon afterwards she married a younger man

another aristocrat, a Swedish Baron some twenty years her junior. Her death in 1919 was reported as if it were a Royal death, and her body interred in *Père Lachaise* Cemetery, Paris. A later internment nearby was to be of another famous singer with an equally infamous life - Edith Piaf.

John Cone has written the most detailed biography, so far, of a true prima donna. Perhaps the only '*Diva Absoluta*' ever. There has only been one other biography in English of Patti, and that written in 1920 was the 'authorized' version by Herman Klien and subject to the censorial approval of her third husband. A later Spanish biography has so many flaws and much invention that it is not worthy of the classification Biography.

Professor Cone has unearthed details previously lost in the archives of time and presents an accurate history of Patti's doings, undoings and live styles. He presents the reader with an accurate academic story of her career; if I miss anything from the author it is the lack of comment upon her reasons for her actions. As a chronicler John Cone has succeeded magnificently, as a biographer though he seems unwilling to 'get under the skin' of his subject. The lack of character analysis of his subject shows through as in an early chapter he calls Patti a Republican, whereas her behaviour throughout life, whilst not truly Royal by Victorian standards, had all the trappings of royalty. For sure, she fulfilled the role as Queen of Song and of Craig-Y-Nos perhaps providing the population of south Wales with a resident Court.

Personally I have always assumed that Patti took a Marquis, not he taking her as his wife. He undoubtedly gave her an *entrée* to the Second Empire and as a life-style mirroring her operatic roles, it was probably doomed from the overture.

Her second act was played out in the arms of the tenor. Ernest Nicolini, a family man, captivated her as he had captivated others before her, they captured each other, her status as '*prima donna assoluta*' on this stage was not challenged. His status as the supporting '*tenore*' was enhanced. He was able to understand her needs, her caprices, the perfect consort to the Queen of Song. Their castle in Wales was away from everything : but it was the centre of everything. Patti's realm was created without the Marquis's crown.

Visited by royalty, Patti and Nicolini visited the world and conquered opera houses everywhere. Here was 'Hollywood' before the movies. As the second act drew to a close the tenor fell ill and dropped from grace to die in a French spa.

The third act opened and a young Swedish Baron appeared as from nowhere. Taken from relative obscurity to re-kindle the flame of love and provide yet another title for the fifty-five year old soprano. As always the quest for youth demands its price and there was less and less opera, more and more solo performances, less and less travel. Although her life was slowing up there was still that fulfilment to had from another farewell tour of the States. So the third act drifts somewhat aimlessly into a fourth and final act as the opera runs out of steam.

There was no dramatic death at the footlights for this soprano, merely a fading away as 'the war to end all wars' played across Europe and trapped her in her adopted land. Just as there was little celebration of the Armistice, so there

is no last *joie de vivre* in the castle. Finally the curtain falls. The *prima donna* is dead. The young Baron clears away the set, burns the private papers and many photographs, then closes the door.

Not until Callas would the world of opera have another '*prima donna assoluta*', a capricious star capable of playing the dramas on and off the stage. By Callas' time though, the audience and cast had changed.

John Cone's scholarly work is accompanied by Bill Moran's excellent discography, although I wonder how many of us will be able, or care enough, to play our Pattis accurately to two decimal places of revolutions per minute. I do disagree with Bill on one point: my own researches reveal that matrix number 547f (originally unpublished) IRCC.33, HMB 78 *Ave Maria* (Bach/Gounoud) did not have violin obligato by Marianne Eisler, the recording cards state "Local Band Master", this could only have been Mr W F Hulley of Swansea a regular visitor to Patti. Landon Ronald was the source of the Eisler credit, I fancy either a Welsh bandmaster wasn't quite the image Ronald would wish to promote, or he forgot. Bill Moran and I agree about one major fact:- There was no Patti phonograph cylinder. Yes I know that there was a glass case complete with brown wax cylinder and engraved plaque at Hayes. However it was never transcribed onto any other medium, and when it was 'unearthed' by EMI Music Archives it was broken. The mystery remains as to whom it was and who placed there. But the rumours may now be scotched.

There is a lengthy chronology by Thomas Kaufman of her career. Unfortunately the chronology lacks accuracy and consistency. Some easily obtainable data on her not inconsiderable concert tours in Britain, (tours that even with the comparative ease of modern transport, most popular entertainers would balk at), without this detail her substantial 'concertizing' (what an ugly Americanism that is) looks merely superficial. There are contradictions to the author's text, although it has to be said that there is a lot of new material concerning her tours in South America and Russia. It is to be hoped that the accuracy here is better. No doubt considerations of cost and timing affected the publishers' decision to carry this in its present form. The publishing editor's hand is evident throughout the book, with a touch of 'political correctness' not evident in John Cone's earlier works on the Opera, nor in his lengthy correspondances with me. Describing the award of the Freedom of The City of Swansea to Patti in June 1912 as bestowing her with the title "Free Woman" is a singularly unfortunate turn of phrase from the publisher's editor!

In my own extensive studies of Patti's life I have reached the conclusion that she was a very complex person, full of contradiction, but always achieving her own ends no matter what. At her death her third husband was charged with destroying all her personal papers, an action she had performed herself twice before in her life: a biographer's nightmare. John Cone has unearthed much new material and clarified some previously muddled details about her early life. I cannot help feeling that I wish there were more character analysis of this remarkable woman. But here now is the definitive biographical work.



*The Melody Maker. (The Gramophone Review). April, 1929.*

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\*Blue Shadows ..... Fox Trot

(Light Vocal). ELSIE CARLISLE.

The Popular Comedienne.

(Orchestral Accompaniment).

Is there anything wrong in that? ..... A83

Dreaming of to-morrow ..... A83

FREDERICK LAKE, Tenor.

(Orchestral Accompaniment).

God Bless King George ..... A87

Land of Hope and Glory ..... A87

(Instrumental).

TONY LOWRY & DONALD NORTH.

(The two on one Piano).

Crazy Rhythm (introducing "Where

have you been all my life.") ..... A88

There's a Rainbow round my shoulder

(introducing "King for a day.") ..... A88

DEAUVILLE DANCE ORCHESTRA.

\*I ain't never been kissed ..... Fox Trot A82

BOB HARING AND HIS ORCHESTRA.

\*Me and the Man in the Moon .... Fox Trot

ERIC SIMS, Light Baritone.

(Of "I kiss your hand, Madame," fame).

Sweetheart of all my Dreams ..... A84

The Garden where my Dreams came true ..

(Orchestral Accompaniment).

(Light Vocal).

THE FOUR HARMONY KINGS.

Dixie Dawn ..... A86

Beautiful ..... A86

(Orchestral). GEORGES HAECK (from

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# John McCormack

## Brian Fawcett Johnston

*John McCormack - 'tis fifty years since*

*"Count John McCormack - your song is still ringing,*

*"As fresh and as clear as the trill of the birds.*

*"In world weary hearts it is sighing and singing*

*"In pathos too sweet for the tenderest words.*

*"The old heart strings quiver, the old voice is shaking,*

*"In sighs and in tears burns its yearning refrain.*

*"The old vision dimmed and the old heart is breaking,*

*"Count John McCormack - inspire us again.*

(adapted from James Whitcomb Riley, 1849-1916.)

In a departure from normal editorial policy, TMR is publishing within this issue an article not totally entirely directly related to the world of the talking machine. Under the editorship of Ernie Bayly, TMR published a discography by Brian Fawcett-Johnston of the recorded output of John McCormack. Mr Johnston has again placed his laborious endeavours at the disposal of this magazine, this time in a listing of the newly discovered recordings, as well as all the songs, performances on film - including those transferred to video, concert appearances for Booseys the music publishers, newly discovered recordings, and performances of the Irish tenor at Covent Garden. We believe that this work is too important to lovers of McCormack's singing to ignore, and have therefore published this work as an adjunct to the earlier discography. (TMR No.74 is still available, see advert on back cover page for details.).

THE ARCHIVE of Boosey and Hawkes plc is situated in the basement of their head office at 295, Regent Street, London W1R 8JH (tel: 071 580 2060) and I have been fortunate in securing the cooperation of their two archivists, Ronald Phillips and Derek Barnard, who showed me how to use the surviving material to best advantage. The chief value of this research is that the dates of publication and first performances of the creator songs written for McCormack are vital sources for dating his 1907-1909 Odeon recordings. The archive is open to the public, so anyone can check the information here published.

For every year between 1878 and 1951 there is a huge leather bound volume containing, in chronological order, all the songs published in that year. I spent four days in the archive going through every song in these tomes, each one the size of a cathedral lectern Bible. A batch of anything between three and ten songs were published each week and at the first song of each weekly batch there is a pencilled date, such as 28/1/79. For example, in that week was published the edition of 'The Girl I Left Behind Me', which McCormack recorded on 8th June 1917. From the songsheet one can see that it was arranged by Henry Gadsby (1842-1907) for the tenor Barton McGuckin (1852-1917) and was published in the key of G. The traditional English words and melody (Pre Brighton

Camp, 1776) are anonymous.

Another early example is 'The Last Watch', published on 12th January 1881 for Joseph Maas (1847-1886), in the key of G and recorded by McCormack in that key between 12th August 1909 (the date of 'The Fairy Glen' recorded at the same time, was published by Boosey), and 14th October 1909, the night before he sailed for America.

It would be too lengthy to list the almost 200 songs and arias published by Boosey, and which McCormack recorded, without doing a new discography. However, a listing of the creator songs, especially written for him, and superscribed on the sheet music, "As recorded by John McCormack", will clear up the question of which composers wrote for him and when.

[This is given later in this article.-Ed]

### The recorded range of John McCormack

I have pitched the opening and closing sung notes for the whole of his recorded output, with the exception of the 15 surviving recordings of which I cannot get a tape, and find the lowest note recorded by him to be bottom bass B natural, two octaves and one whole tone below the top D flat in 'The vacant chair'.

One top D flat in 'The vacant chair' (1915); Three top C's - twice in 'La Boheme: Che gelida manina' (1908) and once in 'The awakening' (also from 1908). There are 13 top B's, these occur in - 'Faust: Salve dimora' (1910); 'La Boheme: Che gelida manina' (1910). 'Faust: All' erta!' (twice at the close of each take, 1910). 'Somewhere a voice is calling', (1914); 'Roses of Picardy' (1919); 'I pescatori di perles: Mi par d'udir ancora'. (1912); 'Li marinari' (twice in 1911); 'La favorita: Spir'to gentil' (1909); 'The cradle song' (1916).

As satisfactory bottom B naturals recorded by tenors are extremely uncommon, I have pleasure in listing those I have found to date.

- 1) and 2) 'The magpie's nest' (a County Dublin fragment, published by Boosey in Irish Country Songs, volume 2. Published 3rd September 1915.) Recorded by McCormack (both surviving takes) between 25th November 1929 and 16th January 1930 in Fox Studios, Hollywood. There are seven bottom B's on each take on the words "Lay you down to rest," and the final words, "magpie's nest".
- 3) 'Herr was tragt der boden hier?' (Jesus, what doth the soil here bear?). Composed, 24th November 1889. Recorded 28th June 1935. The bottom B is on the penultimate note, "reich ich dir."
- 4) 'So deep is the night.' Composed 25th August 1832. A bottom B at the beginning of each verse. Recorded 2nd May 1940. (Published by Keith Prowse/EMI Music).
- 5) and 6) 'Oh, what bitter grief is mine.' Composed c.1775-6. The bottom B's are on the repeated words "I never." Two on each take. Recorded 27th December 1936 and 19th December 1940.

### The newly discovered McCormack recordings

Since the publication of the Cartwright and Worth discography in 1984, and my own in

1988, McCormack discographic studies have not stood still. In fact there is probably twice as much information accumulated about him now as there was a few years ago. Also, many new recordings have come to light, and will be produced by me on CD as soon as possible. The new material, hitherto believed lost, is as follows:

Moonlight and roses. BVE 32535-1

What a wonderful world it would be. BVE 32540-1

Tick, tick, tock. BVE 38732-2

Pan's Angelicus. CVE 38733-1

A dream of Spring. Bb 11337-2

Die liebe hat gelogen. Bb 11343-1

Ireland, Mother Ireland. BVE 56192-3

Wo find ich trost?. CVE 58691-1

Three aspects. Bb 11343-1

The garden where the praties grow. Bb 21036-1

Little child of Mary. OEA 2122-2

I met an angel. OEA 2131-1

Little wooden head. OEA 8526-2

The light of the sunset glow. OEA 9069-1

Our finest hour. OEA 9460-2

A rose still blooms in Picardy. OEA 9489-1

and a newly unearthed radio broadcast: 9th January 1937 (Hollywood, California)

'Kathleen Mavourneen'; 'A fairy story by the fire'.

(my thanks go to Peter Martland for advising me of the last which is held in the Library of Congress.) The number of surviving McCormack recordings is now up to 789.

Several of the artists with whom he appeared at both Covent Garden and The Metropolitan also made recordings with him:

Emmy Destinn (sop) 3 recordings of which 1 survives.

Fritz Kreisler (vln) 50 recordings, 26 survive.

Louise Kirkby Lunn (cont) 1 recording, survives.

Nellie Melba (sop) 4 recordings, 3 survive.

Giuseppe Mario Sammarco (bar) 14 recordings, 9 survive.

Maggie Teyte (sop) 3 recordings, 2 survive.

Edna Thornton (con) 1 recording, survives.

Recordings made by McCormack each year by label, or for cinema film or radio broadcast, and number surviving:

1904	G&T	35	24
	Edison	10	10
	Edison B	21	20
1905	(nil)	-	-
1906	Edison B	3	1
	Sterling	7	7
	Odeon	14	12
1907	Odeon	15	14
1908	Odeon	33	31
1909	Odeon	31	25
1910	Victor	31	22
	HMV	4	3
1911	Victor	20	15
	HMV	6	3
1912	Victor	29	19
	HMV	1	1
1913	Victor	41	24
1914	Victor	61	29
1915	Victor	39	21
1916	Victor	39	18



1917	Victor	34	16
1918	Victor	24	11
1919	Victor	35	11
1920	Victor	43	14
1921	Victor	10	5
1922	Victor	25	8
1923	Victor	25	14
1924	Victor	22	11
	HMV	41	25
1925	Victor	57	27
1926	Victor	26	19
1927	Victor	36	25
	HMV	27	23
	radio	3	3
1928	Victor	40	21
1929	Victor	26	10
	film	37	20
1930	Victor	19	15
	HMV	21	16
1931	Victor	7	2
1932	HMV	17	10
	film	1	1
1933	HMV	15	7
	film	1	1
	radio	1	1
1934	HMV	24	18
	radio	1	1
1935	HMV	27	24
	radio	2	2
1936	HMV	14	10
	film	3	3
	radio	8	8
1937	radio	10	10
1938	radio	7	7
1939	HMV	8	4
1940	HMV	49	35
	radio	4	4
1941	HMV	58	38
1942	HMV	13	8
	radio	2	2
TOTALS:		1263	789

### McCormack on air

A listing of some radio broadcasts to give a 'flavour' of his radio work.

#### 1 Jan 1925, New York. 'Victor Talking Machine Company Programme'.

Adeste Fidelis; Jocelyn - Berecuse (aria of Jocelyn) act 2; Marcheta; Mother Machree; La Traviata - Parigi o cara noi lasceremo, with Lucrezia Bori, (duet of Alfredo Germont and Violetta Valery) act 3. With the Victor orchestra.

#### 1 Jan 1926, New York. 'Victor Talking Machine Company Programme'.

Luoghi sereni e cari; To the children, op.26 No.7; When you and I were young, Maggie; The Bohemian girl - When other lips (aria of Thaddeus act 3, sc.1); The night hymn at sea, with Lucrezia Bori; Just a cottage small; You forgot to remember. With the Victor orchestra.

[The recordings of When you and I were young, Maggie, and The night hymn at sea were reported to exist at the American Museum of Broadcasting in New York. However Peter Martland has heard these recordings, and confirms that they are the usual Victor commercial versions. They should therefore be deleted from discographies. - B F J.]

#### 1st January 1927, New York.

Just for today; Calling me back to you, with orchestra; All mein gedanken (Loch Eimer Liederbuch - 1460); On wings of song, op. 34, No.2 with Edwin Schneider - pno.); The Holy Child, - with orchestra.

[The 2nd, 3rd and 5th items are in existence and released on Lp. This broadcast also featured contributions from Mischa Elman and Rosa Ponselle.]

#### 28th November 1929. New York.

The Victor; A hymn of Thanksgiving; To the children, op. 26, No.7; Bird songs at eventide; Kathleen Mavourneen; Come where my love lies dreaming; O, Mary dear; Bantry Bay; Thanks be to God. With orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret, and Edwin Schneider - piano.

#### 13th March 1930. New York. Victor Program.

Song o' my Heart; Ireland, mother Ireland; Xerxes - Ombra mai fu; Little boy blue, op.12, No.4; The rose of Tralee; A pair of sparkling eyes.

[This broadcast was made two days after the world premiere of 'Song o' my heart'.]

#### 17th March 1931. Location uncertain, Household Finance programme.

The forlorn Queen; Molly Brannigan; Oft in the stilly night; The dear little shamrock; The ould plaid shawl; The Irish emigrant; Believe me, if all those endearing young charms.

#### 25th October 1931. Location uncertain. General Electric Twilight Hour.

[No information available]

26th June 1932. Phoenix Park, Dublin. B.B.C. Panis Angelicus.

#### 4th April 1933. Radio City Music Hall, New York.

Panis Angelicus.

#### 18th October 1933. New York.

The heavy hours are almost passed. From "Four songs of the revolutionary period." (Trad. English c.1756) with orchestra.

#### 18th September 1934. New York.

Floridante - Alma mia, si, sol, tu sei. (Aria of Floridante) act 1, sc. 2.

#### 21st August 1935. New York. The Thomas Meighan Programme.

Love's roses. with Edwin Schneider - piano; Believe me, if all those endearing young charms. with Edwin Schneider - piano. The broadcast also featured contributions from James J Walker, Bessie Love and the Debroy Somers Orchestra.

#### 22nd December 1935. Dublin.

[No information available] with symphony orchestra.

#### 4th October 1936. Philadelphia.

Accompanied by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

Aria, (Bach); Semele - Where'er you walk (Aria of Jupiter) act 2; By the bivouac's fitful flame; Panis Angelicus; The last rose of summer; Kathleen Mavourneen.

#### 11th October 1936. New York. R.C.A. Magic Key program.

[No details]

See letter from McCormack to Keane, below.

#### 2nd January 1937. Hollywood, California. N.B.C. Red Channel Broadcast.

##### "Seal Test Saturday Night Party."

John McCormack hosts the show.

One summer morn; The old turf fire; The triumph of time and truth - Dryads, Sylvans and fair Flora, (aria of Pleasure) act 2, No.23; Come in and welcome, dear old friend of mine. With Ferde Grofe Orchestra conducted by Ferde Grofe. Also featured contributions from Jane Pickens, Walter Cassel and Stuart Churchill.

[Broadcast in existence. Library of Congress Call Card No. LWO 12628. (R 26 B) appears as an additional number.]

#### 9th January 1937. Hollywood, California. N.B.C. Broadcast. "The Shell Chateau Show."

Kathleen Mavourneen; A fairy story by the fire.

[Broadcast in existence. Library of Congress Call Card No. RWA 2569 A.]

Both of the above broadcasts are held by the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division of Library of Congress.

#### 14th March 1937. USA Location uncertain.

Spoken introduction by McCormack concerning the American debut of the baritone Robert Irwin.

#### 17th April 1938. Hollywood, California. Standard Brands Bakers programme.

Maureen. Also featured Harriet Hilliard, Ozzie Nelson and Ann Shirley.

#### 6th November 1939. London. B.B.C.

Panis Angelicus, with BBC Orchestra conducted by Clarence Raybould; Vespers; A young maid stood in her father's garden (Trad. Irish, arr. H Hughes); The old house.

#### 25th December 1940. London. B.B.C.

To the children; The gentle maiden; All through the night; The dawning of the day; Panis Angelicus - with 'cello obligato by Douglas Cameron; Oft in the stilly night; I'll walk beside you; Plaisir d'amour; A hymn to Our Lady. All with Gerald Moore - piano. This programme also featured anecdotes from McCormack, shared with F H Grisewood.

#### 15th November 1941. The series "Irish Half Hour" is announced in the *Radio Times*.

My thanks to James Sheehan of New York for much of this information.

### McCormack at Covent Garden.

126 performances in 16 operas, 15th October 1907 to 23rd July 1914.

Title	Role	
Dates: debut, performances,	seasons.	
Cavalleria Rusticana (in Italian)	Turiddu	
15 Oct 1907	5	1907-8
Don Giovanni	(in Italian)	Don Ottavio
6 Nov 1907	10	1907-9-13-14



Rigoletto	(in Italian)	Il Duca di Mantova
23 Nov 1907	22	1907-8-9-11-12-13-14
Lucia di Lammermoor	(in Italian)	Edgardo di Ravenswood
2 May 1908	5	1908-9
I Pescatori di perle	(in Italian)	Nadir
27 May 1908	1	1908
Otello	(in Italian)	Cassio
1 Jul 1908	6	1908-9
La Traviata	(in Italian)	Alfredo Germont
24 Jul 1908	24	1908-9-10-11-12-13
La Somnambula	(in Italian)	Elvino
29 May 1909	7	1909-10-11
La Boheme	(in Italian)	Rodolfo
30 May 1910	21	1910-11-12-13
Lakme	(in Italian)	Gerald
18 Jun 1910	8	1910-11
Il Barbiere	(in Italian)	Conte d'Almiva
26 Jun 1911	3	1911-12
Madama Butterfly	(in Italian)	Lt. Pinkerton
20 Jun 1912	8	1912-13-14
Faust	(in French)	Faust
1 Jul 1913	1	1913
Romeo et Juliette	(in French)	Romeo
22 Jul 1913	1	1913
Mefistofele	(in French)	Faust
26 Jun 1914	3	1914
Tosca	(in Italian)	Mario Cavaradossi
9 Jul 1914	1	1914

#### Total performances: 126

McCormack twice appeared in the opening night of the International Season at Covent Garden. On 23rd April 1910 in 'La Traviata' with Donalda, Sammarco, Berat, Egner, and Crabbe, conducted by Campanini; and on 22nd April 1911 in 'Lakme' with Tetrzzini, Berat, Egner, Burke and Crabbe, conducted by Panizza.

He also appeared in two Royal Command Performances. On 27th May 1908 in act 1 of 'I pescatori di perle' with Tetrzzini, Sammarco and Vanni Marcoux, conducted by Campanini.

This was a State Gala given by King Edward VII for President Armand Fallieres of France. On 26th June 1911 he appeared in the Coronation Gala of King George V and Queen Mary, in act 3 of 'Il barbiere di Siviglia' with Tetrzzini, Sammarco and Vanni Marcoux, conducted by Panizza.

At least two further performances were given by him in the presence of King George V and Queen Mary. The first of these was in 'La Boheme' on 22nd May 1913 to commemorate the Silver Anniversary of the debut of Nellie Melba at the Royal Opera in 1888. The cast included Melba, Gilly, Sparkes and Aquistapace conducted by Panizza. On 22nd July 1913 he appeared in 'Romeo et Juliette' with Melba, Roeder, Berat, Hubberdeau, Marvini and Gilly, conducted by Panizza. This was to commemorate the 20th wedding anniversary of the King and Queen. In 1893 Melba had sung in this same opera with Jean de Reszke on the occasion of the royal marriage.

McCormack appeared at Covent Garden with all those artists with whom he was to record duets and ensembles for His Master's Voice (Melba, Destinn, Lunn, Teyte, Thorton and Sammarco.).

The HMV cast for the lost duet from 'La Traviata' of McCormack and Melba did appear together in this opera at the Royal Opera House on 26 July 1910, 10th June 1913 and 9 July 1913. The duet was recorded at 21 City Road, London, on the 11th May 1910, matrix number 4187f.

The HMV cast for the act 5 final trio from 'Faust' of McCormack, Melba and Sammarco

did not appear together in this opera at Covent Garden. However, on 1st July 1913 McCormack and Melba did appear together at the Royal Opera House in Faust, but in French, when the Mephistopheles was Marvini. Marvini was to create the role of Le Compere in the world premiere of 'La foire de Sorotchintzi' alongside McCormack as Gritzko at Monte Carlo on 17th March 1923. McCormack, Melba and Sammarco were however heard together at Covent Garden in 'La Boheme' (9 times between 30th May 1910 and 4th July 1913) and in 'La Traviata' (3 times - 26th July 1910 to 9th July 1913). Faust final trio 'All erta! All erta! o piu tempo non e'. Recorded at 21 City Road, London on the 11th May 1910. Matrix number 4188f and again on 4190f.

The HMV cast of McCormack, Melba, Thornton and Sammarco were never brought together in Rigoletto at Covent Garden, although all four did appear at the State Gala for King Edward VII and President Fallieres of France on 27th May 1908. However McCormack and Sammarco were in 'I pescatori di perle' act 1 and Melba and Thornton in act 2 of Faust. The nearest to this achievement was on 29 November 1907, 8th May 1908, 14th May 1908, 18 May 1908 and 27 June 1908 when McCormack, Sammarco and Thornton appeared together in 'Rigoletto', while on 12 July 1913, 20th May 1914 and 29 May 1914 McCormack and Melba appeared in the opera. The combination of McCormack, Melba and Thornton was to be heard in the Otello performances of 1st July 1908, 6 July 1908, 16th July 1908, 21 July 1908. Rigoletto act 3 quartet recorded at 21 City Road, London on May 11th 1910, matrix 4189f.

The HMV cast of McCormack and Sammarco in the act 1 duet 'O, il meglio m'iscordavo ... Numero quindici' from Il barbiere di Siviglia was heard together in this opera at Covent Garden on 1st June and 11th July, 1912. Recorded at 21 City Road, London, matrix 5205f on 18th July 1911.

The HMV cast of McCormack and Lunn were only brought together at Covent Garden in the 1911 Coronation Gala of 26th June when Lunn appeared in act 2 of Aida and McCormack in act 3 of Barbiere. For the first act duet 'T'eri un giorno ammalato bambino... Benedicimi tu' from 'I gioielli della Madonna' the connection with the Royal Opera House was that Lunn had appeared in the English premiere there on 30th May 1912. Recorded at 21, City Road, London 15th July 1912 on Ho.201af. In 1912 HMV issued a six disc set of an abridged recording of the opera as follows: Side 1: Overture pt.1. Imperial Philharmonic Orch. cond. Percy Pitt. [HMV D.194], side 2: Overture pt.2. Imperial Philharmonic Orch. cond. Percy Pitt. [HMV D.194], side 3: Act 1 pages 83 - 88. T'eri un giorno ammalato. McCormack and Lunn. [HMV 2-054040]. Side 4: Act 1 pages 108 -111, 'Bacio di lama morso d'amore'. Sammarco. [HMV 2-052072]. Side 5: Act 2 pages 188 - 197, 'Aprila, bella, la fenestrella.' Sammarco. [HMV 2-052073]. Side 6: act 2, pages 200 - 202, Sono un demonio buono'. Sammarco. [HMV 7-52028 and VA.6].

A further duet by McCormack and Lunn was listed by J R Bennett in Voices of the Past, Volume 2, HMV Italian Catalogue, of 'Il dolce idillio' from 'Il segreto di Susanna'. Issued on 2-054041. Unknown. This opera had its Covent Garden premiere in 1911. [See foot note]

#### McCormack at The Met.

McCormack also gave ten performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York:

Grand Opera seasons 1910 - 1 performance, 1917 - 2 performances, 1918 - 4 performances. Concerts, 1 each year 1913, 1914 and 1916.

Title	Debut	No.	Role	seasons
La Traviata	(in Italian)	Alfredo Germont		
29 Nov 1910	1	1910		
La Boheme	(in Italian)	Rodolfo		
16 Nov 1917	2	1917		
Madama Butterfly	(in Italian)	Lt Pinkerton		
4 Feb 1918	2	1918		
Tosca	(in Italian)	Mario Cavaradossi		
20 Feb 1918	2	1918		
Concerts				
2 Feb 1913	3	1913-14-16		

#### More recordings

Two unpublished commercial recordings, 'In Flanders' fields' of 24th September 1918, matrix B 22254-1, and 'Der Soldat (The soldier's execution)' of 19th September 1924, matrix Bb 5099-1 are certainly believed to be still in existence. The test pressings were owned by McCormack's brother Jim, who lived in America. From the 1940's until his death he used to occasionally distribute as Christmas presents test pressings of John's recordings, and the above two were known to be sent as gifts. The destination of 'In Flanders' fields' is unknown to me, but 'The soldier's execution' was sent to the late Leonard F K MacDermott-Roe of London, but arrived broken. Where are those pieces today? It is rare indeed for a single sided record to be broken beyond repair for dubbing purposes.

#### In conclusion

I always look forward to hearing from McCormack lovers at my home, Waverley, 39 Henson Road, March, Camb shire, PE15 8BA.

I can think of no better way of dedicating this article than by letting John McCormack use his own words in a letter which he wrote to the American music publisher, Michael Keane. The following letter appears on the reverse of the printed songsheet for The silent hour of prayer.

Ritz-Carlton Hotel,  
Madison Avenue and 46th, Street,  
New York.

6th October, 1936.

My dear Micheal,

"The silent hour" is one of the finest sacred songs I have come across in a long time, and I am certainly grateful to you for bringing it to my attention.

Will you please write to my good friend Charley Cadman, give him my kindest regards and tell him I am glad to see that he is still writing grand songs.

Let me wish for you a well deserved success in your new venture and don't forget to send along any songs you think might be interesting.

Delighted you liked the broadcast. Am singing again on R.C.A. Magic Key program next Sunday.

Always sincerely yours,

JOHN McCORMACK

To: Mr Michael Keane,  
Music Publisher,  
113, West 57th Street,



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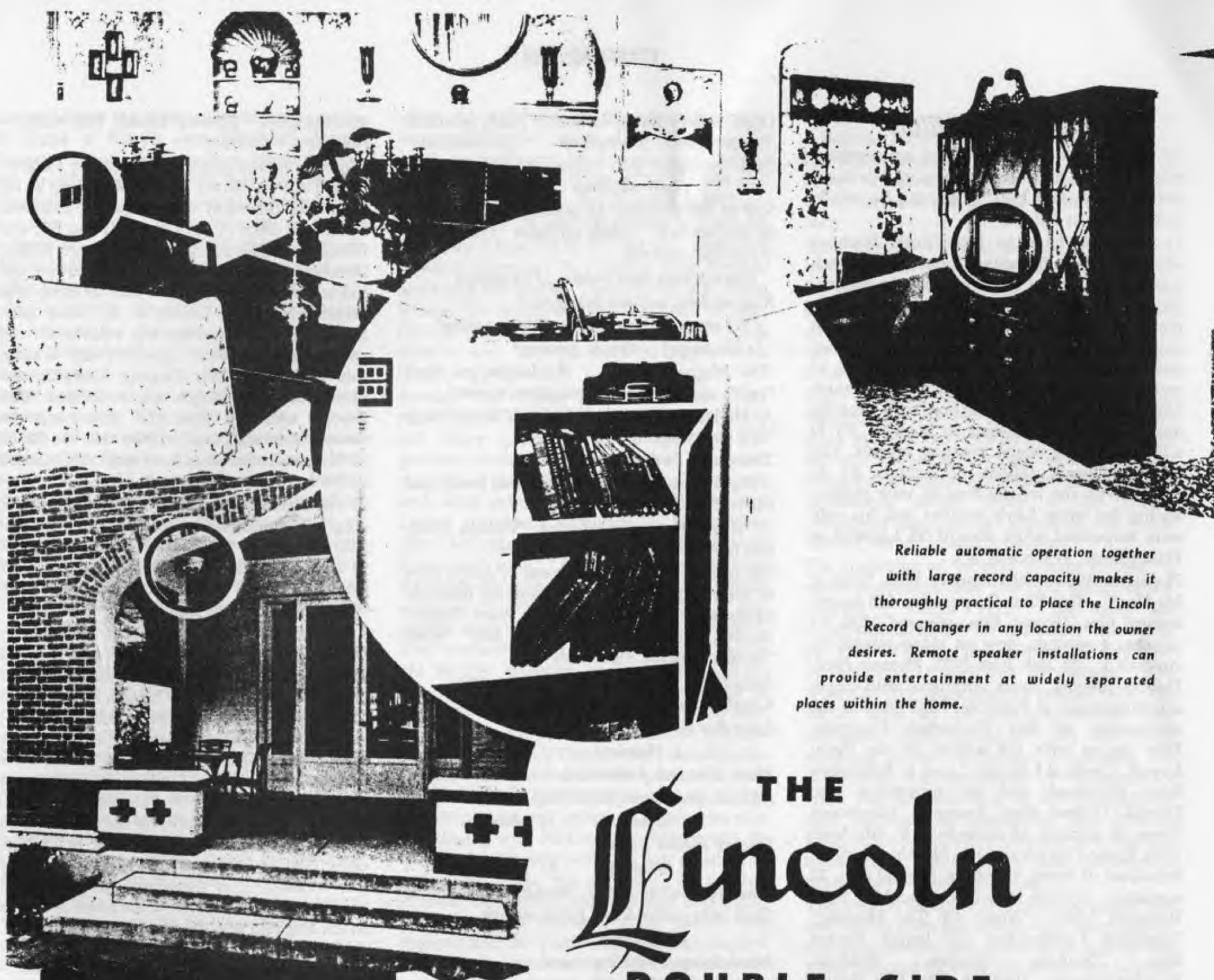
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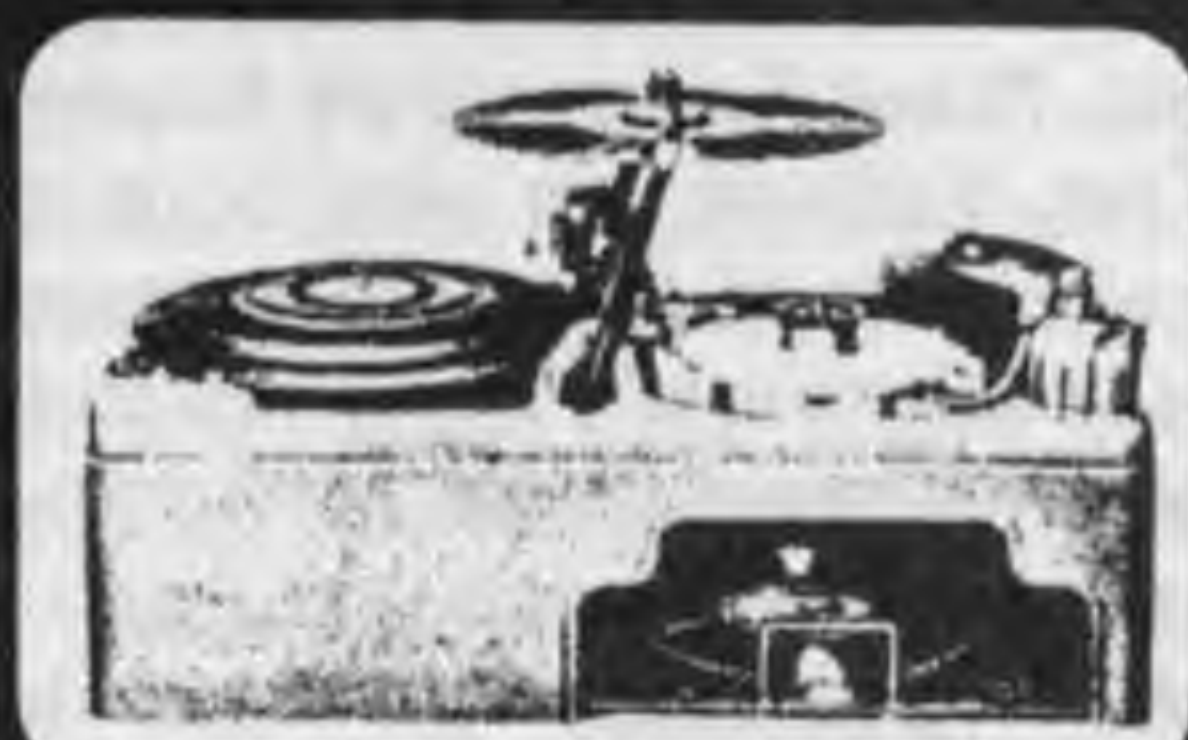
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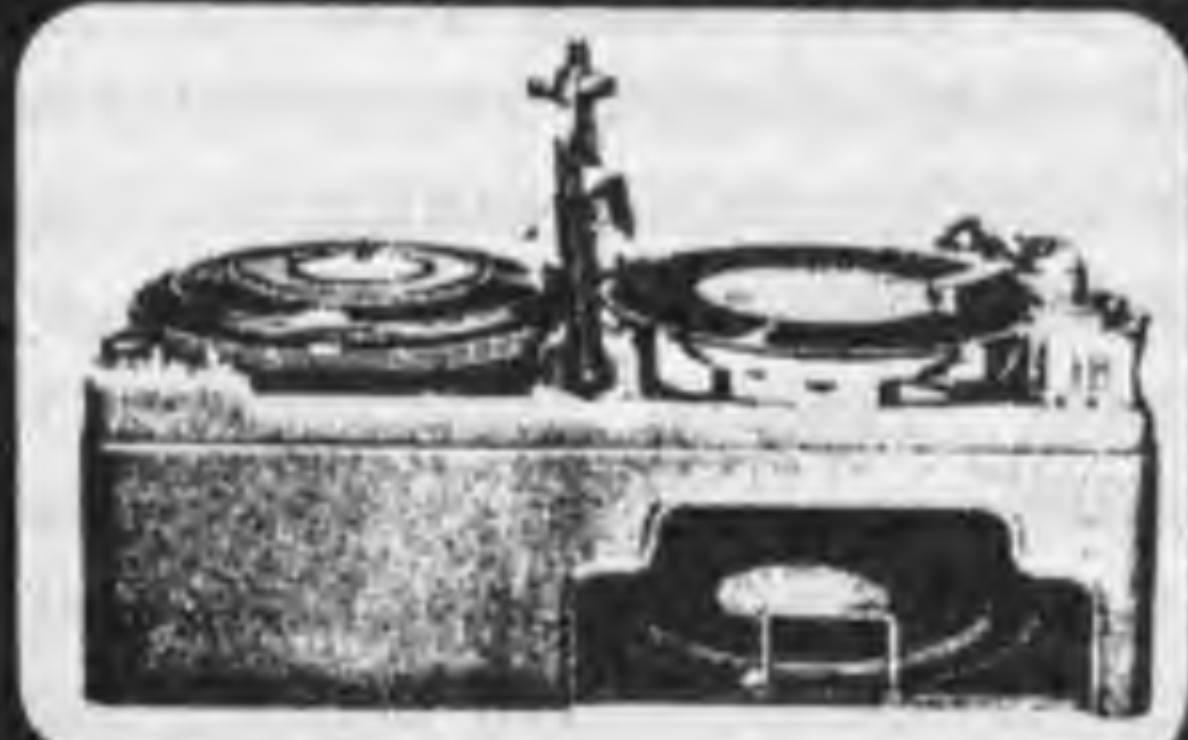
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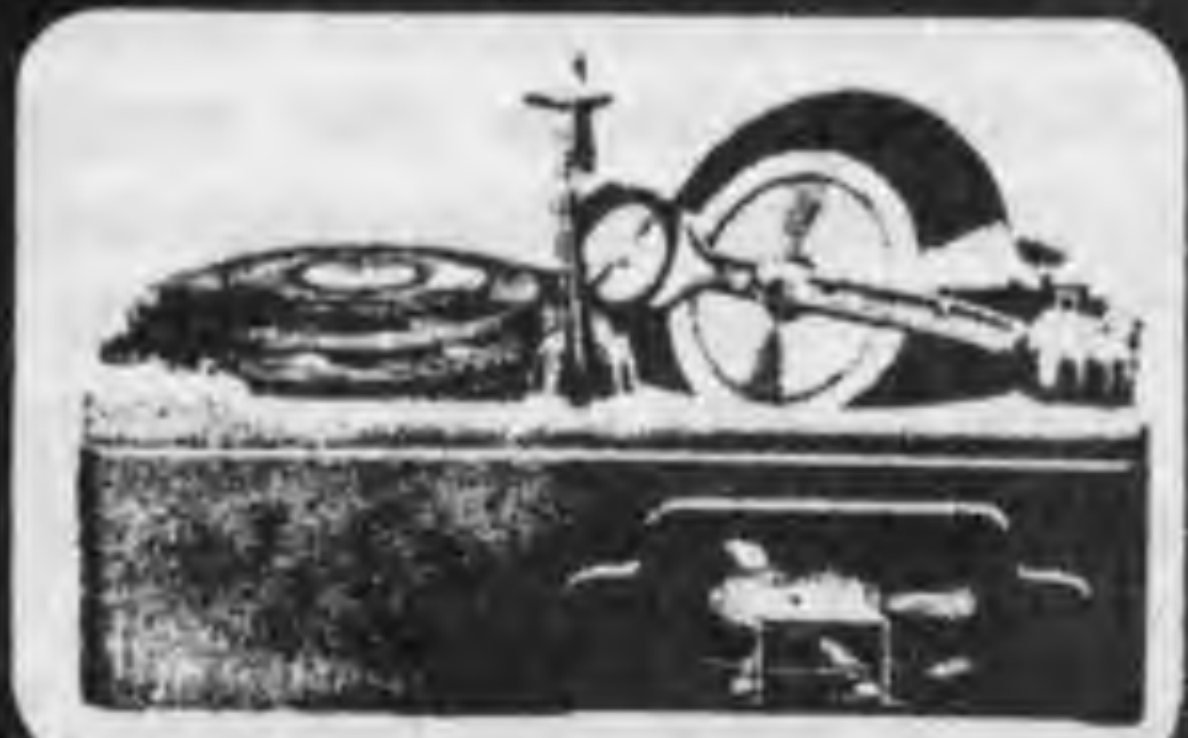
*The Lincoln turns the record over for you...*



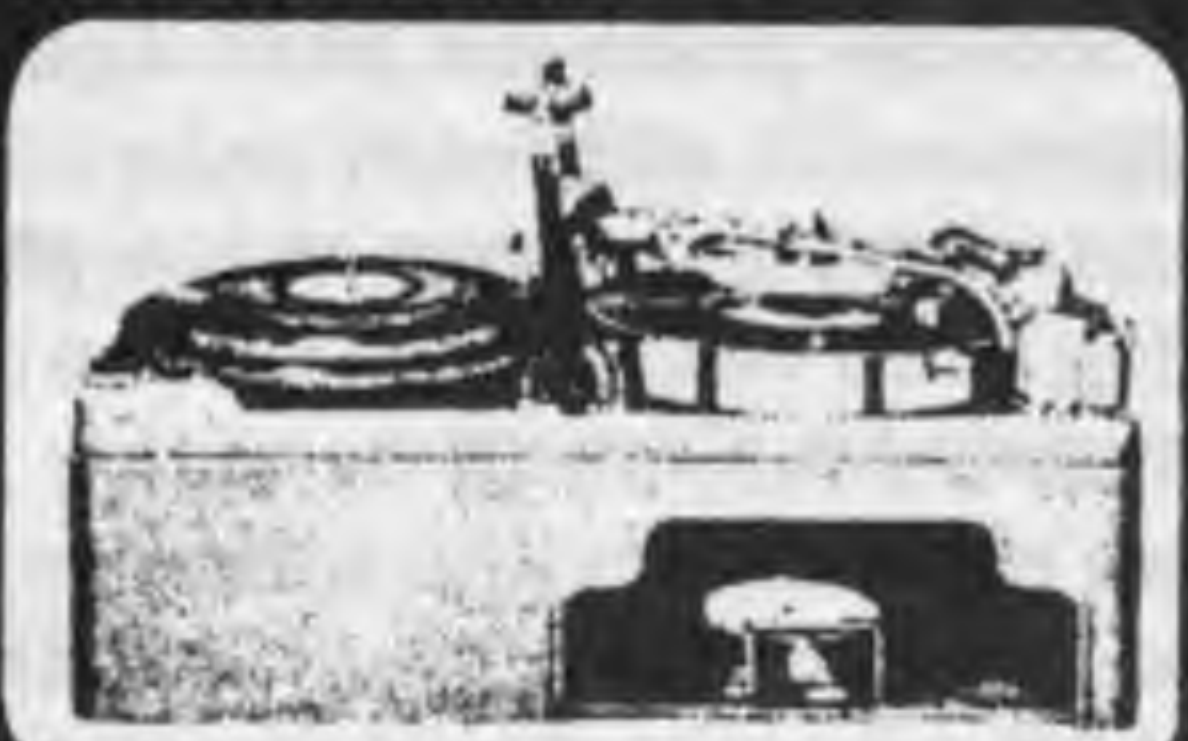
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First side is played ~ ~



Turntable inverts ~ ~



Second side is played ~ ~

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## The surviving films

At present there are ten filmed appearances, nine of which have been shown on television between 1984 and 1991. They can be briefly summarised as follows.

- 1) c.1921 Arriving in New York Harbour aboard a four funnelled liner, McCormack seen raising his hat to crowd and cameramen. (Silent. 14 seconds. #).
- 2) summer 1923. receiving the freedom of Dublin. (Silent. 24 seconds. #).
- 3) c.1925. With his father, mother and family on the steps of a house. (Silent. 12 seconds. #).
- 4) 1926. Arriving in Japan. Disembarking from ocean liner and greeting assembled crowd. (Silent. 16 seconds. #)
- 5) c.1926. Outdoor scene greeting crowds. Lily carrying flowers. (Silent. 11 seconds. #).
- 6) c.1926. With the ten children he took responsibility for when Lily's brother and his wife were torpedoed while aboard SS Leinster in 1918. (Silent. 24 seconds. #).
- 7) August 1929 - 16th January 1930. 'Song o' My Heart'. Fox Film Corporation full length feature film. (Sound film, released 1930. 91 minutes 4 seconds, now on video release by Ansonia.).
- 8) 26th June 1932. Phoenix Park, Dublin. Singing, Panis Angelicus with organ accompaniment at Pontifical High Mass at the culmination of 31st Eucharistic Congress. Film begins with the arrival of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri at Kingstown from Holyhead, and his procession into Dublin. (Sound film. American Paramount News. 10 minutes 55 seconds.).
- 9) 4th April 1933. Radio City Music Hall, New York. NBC broadcast of Panis Angelicus. (Sound film. 32 seconds).
- 10) 11th May 1936 - end May 1936. Released 1937. 'Wings Of The Morning'. Twentieth Century-Fox full length feature film. Denham Studios, Denham, Buckinghamshire, England. The first British Technicolor film. (Sound, Technicolor. 89 minutes). [Transmitted on BBC 2 tv, 8th June 1991, 83 minutes 31 seconds. See notes below.]

### Notes:

1: # after a silent film denotes that the television broadcast version was shown at a faster speed than the original print which may have been shot at approx. 18 frames per second (fps).

[2: Until recently all standard gauge films were shot at 24 fps, however as European tv PAL standard transmissions are at 25 fps - matching the mains frequency of 50 Hz (cps) - all sound is reproduced almost a semi-tone high and reducing the timed length of any film to 96 per cent of the original. There may also be some post editing of tv versions at the time of taking the tv print from the original. -Ed.]

The Video Ansonia issue of 'Song O' My Heart' contains no less than eight "new" McCormack performances, never before heard, and totally different to those of the Lp issues. I have detailed the differences as follows:

Item: /Video: //Lp:

'The Bohemian Girl: When coldness or decit.'  
/Two bar pno. intro. //Half verse pno. intro.  
'In The Place Where They Make The Gas'  
(sung by J M Kerrigan)/only on video  
Irish melody, Coll. Petrie. (pno solo Schneider)  
/only on video // n.a.  
'A Fairy Story By The Fire' / No frog in throat  
on the word "day" when sung first time.  
Different surrounding words in childrens'  
dialogue. // Frog in the throat...

Organ solo by Edwin Schneider /only on video  
'Just for today' / identical // identical  
Irish melody. pno solo by McCormack  
/only on video //n.a.  
'Off to Philadelphia' (fragment) self pno. acc.  
by McCormack /only on video //n.a.  
'I Feel you near me'  
/speech over first words //no speech...  
Kitty my love, will you marry me?  
/ He sings "I have a goose that is crying"  
// He sings " ... that is grazing"  
'The Magpie's Nest' / He laughs on word  
"rest", and sings "LAY you down to rest".  
// He laughs on word "MAGPIE'S" and sings  
"SIT you down...."  
The rose of Tralee (verse 2)  
/ Word "Beauty" shaded, "She was lovely and  
fair" Word "Valley" shaded  
// Word "Beauty" unshaded, "Though lovely  
and fair" Word "Valley" unshaded  
The rose of Tralee (Death scene of Mary) Here  
he sings verse 2 only. / Completely different  
performance to either of above. Word "Valley"  
shaded. Though lovely and fair" Word  
"Beauty" shaded. video only  
Sings rapid scales in E flat. / video only  
Luoghi sereni e cari / identical // identical  
Little Boy Blue Op. 12, No.4.  
/ identical // identical  
Plaisir d'amour. / identical // identical  
All mein gedanken (Minnelied)  
/ identical // identical  
Ireland, mother Ireland.  
/ identical // identical  
I hear you calling me. / identical // identical  
Orch. play earlier heard Petrie melody.  
/video only  
Mendelssohn's wedding march  
/video only  
A pair of blue eyes:  
/"At the twilight amber call"  
// "At the ember twilight's call"

### Cast list

Sean O' Carolan, a celebrated singer.-  
John McCormack (1884-1945)  
Mary Lenahan, a deserted wife.- Alice Joyce  
(1889-1955)  
(formerly Sean's childhood sweetheart)  
Eileen Lenahan, Mary's daughter.-  
Maureen O'Sullivan (1911- )  
Tad Lenahan, Mary's son.-  
Tommy Clifford  
Fergus O'Donnell, Eileen's sweetheart.-  
John Garrick (1902- )  
Mona, Sean's friend and neighbour.-  
Effie Ellsler  
Peter Keegan, a carter.- J M Kerrigan  
(1885-1964)  
Dan Rafferty, a wit. - J Farrell MacDonald  
(1875-1952)  
Aunt Elizabeth Kennedy, Mary's aunt.-  
Emily Fitzroy  
Vincent Glennon, Sean's accompanist.-  
Edwin Schneider (1874-1954)  
Dennis F Fullerton, an impressario.-  
Edward Martindel  
Guido, an operatic bass.- Andreas Perello de  
Seguro (1874-1953)  
Post Office clerk.- Gwen McCormack (1908- )  
Director - Frank Borzage (1890-1962), Asst.  
dir. - Lew Borzage, Story and dialogue - Tom  
Barry, adaptation - Sonia Levien (1888-1960),  
settings - Harry Oliver, costumes - Sophie  
Wachner, sound engineer - George P Costello,

photography - Chester Lyons, film editor -  
Margaret V Clancey.

World premiere given at 44th Street Theatre,  
New York on March 11th 1930. 'Song o' my  
heart' was filmed at three separate locations.  
1) August 1929, A fairy story by the fire was  
filmed on McCormack's estate, Moore Abbey,  
Monasterevin, Co. Kildare, Ireland on the  
banks of the River Barrow. 'Just for today' was  
possibly filmed in Ireland at the same time.  
As Tad Lenahan pumps the bellows for the  
church organ in which 'Just for today' is sung,  
this may mean that Tommy Clifford, who  
played Tad was brought over to Ireland. Can  
anyone who has seen the video and the  
church, absolutely confirm that this was filmed  
in Monasterevin Church, or any other church  
in the area?

2) The concert sequence was filmed in the Los  
Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium between  
25th November 1929 and 16th January 1930.  
3) The remainder of the film was made in Fox  
Film Studios, Hollywood, between 25th  
November 1929 and 16th January 1930.

The character Sean O'Carolan, adopted by  
McCormack for the film, is derived from an  
early hero of the tenor. Turlough Carolan  
(born near Nobber, Co. Meath, in 1670, and  
died at Ballyfarnon, Co. Roscommon in 1738)  
was an Irish harper, composer and collector  
who became blind at the age of 18, after  
contracting smallpox. Under the patronage of  
Mrs McDermott Roe he flourished, and was  
able to collect a wonderful edition of Irish  
folksongs. They were published in Dublin,  
circa 1780 as 'A Favourite Collection ... of  
Irish Tunes ... of Carolan.' His position in  
the history of Irish music is the same as that in  
which England regards Cecil James Sharp.

## The story line

The first sequence commences in a typical  
Irish village of 1929, with sheep being driven  
past the stuccoed and whitewashed cottages,  
while in the centre of the square sits the  
carter, Peter Keegan (J M Kerrigan) chatting  
to Dan Rafferty, his neighbour and rival for  
the affection of the more mature unattached  
ladies of the area. Across the street they hear  
Sean O'Carolan (John McCormack) and his  
accompanist Vincent Glennon (Edwin  
Schneider) performing the second verse of  
'When other lips', from 'The Bohemian Girl'.  
This is the only filmed recording of  
McCormack singing an operatic aria, and it is  
considerably more dramatic than his other  
three recorded versions.

Vincent gently reproaches Sean for  
abandoning his great career in order to care  
for the children of his childhood sweetheart,  
Mary Lenahan (Alice Joyce), who has been  
deserted and left destitute by her faithless and  
irresolute blackguard of a husband. Keegan  
and Rafferty discuss the merits of Sean's  
voice, the former opining that it does not have  
the "Nyaah". Keegan goes on to demonstrate  
this vocal quality in the following song: "For  
the girls admire my corduroys, "And the boys  
all say as I pass, "Nyaah! There's Mr  
McCann, he's the head foreman, "In the place  
where they make the gas.

The comedy wears the years lightly and - in  
my opinion - is still funny today. McCormack  
appears from his cottage and laughs at all this,  
hoping that Peter's horse, if none other, might  
appreciate his, "Nyaah".

Scene two features the distressing departure  
from the old family home of Mary and her  
children, now in reduced circumstances. They



journey across the village in Keegan's cart to the home of Mary's aunt Elizabeth (Emily Fitzroy). Elizabeth has neither sympathy nor love to offer, being an out and out virago - born aged forty with a thorough knowledge of the class system. Meanwhile in a gently humorous and affectionate scene McCormack helps his old neighbour Mona (Effie Ellsler) to convert a topiary rabbit into a dog (of sorts!). He declares that "Something will have to be done for them," indicating Mary and her family.

The changes of scene are often quite sudden - almost episodic, in the manner of a silent film, for we are only 22 months into the age of talkies. The most abrupt change of sequence comes after Sean and Vincent discuss the merits of an old tune, collected by Petrie, which Sean has just received from Noonan's of Dublin. Suddenly they hear the sounds of children outside. McCormack steps through the cottage door of the set and on to the location shot, where the real church and bridge are; so very different from the studio set used in other scenes.

Next is the winning sequence with the children and their 'request' spot. John obliges with 'A Fairy Story by the Fire', this certainly reminds one that there is more to great singing than flashing eyes and blazing passion, with the obligatory two phrases of caressing mezza voce somewhere near the middle of a song. McCormack first saw this scene in London in October 1929 (shot in August that year), probably at Fox's British offices at 13 Berner's Street. He was taken aback by his own avoirdupois as seen on screen, and by the time the remainder of the film was shot he appears to be some three stones (40lbs) lighter!

Scene four treats us the mouth organ playing of Mary's son Tad (Tommy Clifford), his appearance raises the question as to why Mary's two children should have totally different accents, with Eileen in contrast, carefully speaking received pronunciation. Tad pumps the bellows of the church organ so that Vincent can accompany 'Just for Today'.

Fergus tells Eileen of his intention to seek his fortune in Dublin. Now follows the surprise of the film with the village Post Office scene, featuring McCormack's daughter Gwen as the postal clerk. This is just a little poignant, as McCormack's last job application before becoming a professional singer in 1902, had been for a vacancy as a postal clerk. Gwen, whose character is called Miss Jedd or Miss Jack - I can't quite make out Keegan's word as he replies to her - calls the carter to deliver a cablegram from New York to Sean. As the cable is delivered Sean is playing an Irish dance melody as a piano solo. The message is from a great American impresario Dennis F Fullerton (Edward Martindel) who is delighted at Sean's decision to sing in New York. Delighted with this response, Sean, sings the last two lines of 'Off to Philadelphia' in the key of F. Recorded by HMV in 1941 in the key of E.

Seeing the lovers on the hillside, McCormack sits down at the piano beside Schneider and sings 'I feel you near me', written especially for the film. Don't miss the pianissimo high G in this song, a real McCormack special.

At his farewell party Sean sings 'Kitty my love, will you marry me?' - an anonymous Ulster poem and melody, arranged by Herbert Hughes and published by Boosey on the 8th March 1913. After the party, the two comic characters Keegan and Rafferty meet John, who now gets ample revenge for the "Nyaah"

joke. As proof that he does indeed possess the 'vital' musical quality, sings 'The magpie's nest' - a traditional Irish poem, and County Dublin melody also arranged by Hughes and published by Boosey - 3rd September 1915.

In both takes of this song there are several magnificent bass B's in the last line, worthy of repeated listening. "If I were a king, I would make you my queen, "And I'd roll you in my arms as the meadows they are green. "Nyaah, I'd roll you in my arms and I'd lay (sit) you down to rest, "And it's there I'd lay you down in the magpie's nest.

Perhaps the finest moment in the film, surrounds the love scene between Sean (John) and Mary (Alice Joyce) a splendid and gracious heroine, with sensitive nose and mouth and deeply spiritual eyes. Where are such faces today? After singing 'The rose of Tralee' (originally published in 1850) Mary says "Ah! sean you haven't forgotten how to sing a love song." At this point in watching the video, my wife Rosemary remarked, "Well, whatever 'it' was he certainly had it. The women must have thrown themselves at him." They certainly did. This comment is borne out by the evidence of Sig. Renzo Aiolfi, artistic director of the Teatro Chiabrera in Savona, when speaking during one of the 1984 McCormack centennial television tributes. Aiolfi recalled, "There was considerable disagreement between two impresarios, one from Milan and one from Savona, about the way the season was going. The soprano who was singing with McCormack, Margaretta du Novlu, did not sing well and was whistled at and jeered. She was replaced by another soprano from Milan who was also unpopular. Finally a third soprano, Rina Brussi, was engaged and the disaster turned into triumph for both the soprano and McCormack (who incidentally adopted the Italian name Giovanni Foli, Lilly's maiden name, for the occasion.)."

"When singing during a series of performances of 'L'amico Fritz' - which were highly successful - on four occasions the audience demanded an encore of the third act. Because of the illness of the Chiabrera tenor, Dupont, he sang in 'La Cabrera (The rebel), with the soprano Tensini Pedretti. He was a great success. The newspapers acclaimed him, and on his departure he was carried shoulder high to the station, by his admirers - his lady admirers."

We are treated in the next scene of the film, to some Mediterranean ham acting of the highest order from Andreas de Seguro, operatic bass, veteran of nearly 500 appearances at the Met. McCormack, by his naturalness of style, overshadows de Seguro completely. After the death scene of Mary, accompanied by yet another take of 'The rose of Tralee' (verse 2 only), begins the concert sequence, with those fine scales sung rapidly in the key of E flat. This sequence has six songs containing several remarkable performances. The opening song, 'Luoghi sereni e cari' (Land ever calm and peaceful) is given a more exciting, indeed Homeric, interpretation than on any of the other three surviving versions. The words "*che l'amarezza dei mesti giorni in cui i tormenti d'un triste inganno*", ("in which the bitterness of those sad days, in which the torments of a sorry deceit first taught me."), are delivered in an epic, and indeed, fully Dantesque Italian.

Next comes a complete change of mood with the loving and sentimental, 'Little boy blue' Op.12, No.4. A rather attractive reading without any attempt at sobbing, which would

have ruined the atmosphere, but in its place is a popular feature in McCormack's singing - the tendency to sing louder and softer every other measure, bringing a conversational touch to the words as well as suiting the 6/8 time.

Song number three is perhaps the greatest interpretation of all the 14 songs he sings, and for just one reason. One might not believe that McCormack was so far ahead of his contemporaries until the magnificent trill on the line, "*Elle me quite et prend un autre amant*".

The following song 'All mein gedanken' (Minnelied - All my thanks), is the earliest piece of music recorded by the tenor, being an old and anonymous German melody of 1460, arranged by Sigfrid Karg-Elert, 1877-1933. A particularly subtle touch is the rubato (borrowed time) on the repeat of the words "*Bei dir, bei dir ist kein verlangen*".

The rendering of 'Ireland, mother Ireland', is more passionate than the best selling HMV DA.119 / Victor 1452. The song was composed especially for his voice, with words by P J O'Reilly and music by Raymond Loughborough, published by Boosey, April 3rd 1922. The main point of interest being the larger scale of concept, volume and execution when compared with the three surviving studio recordings, reinforcing the contention that the whole of McCormack's voice was not captured by the gramophone until perhaps the session of 25th October 1940, from which date onwards the slightest intention of his sibilant and labia-dental sounds can be heard in detail.

The concert closes with 'I hear you calling me' and differs from the seven other recordings of the song in that the 4/4 beat is slightly less tightly adhered to, while the tempo has become steadily faster over the 21 years since he first sang it. The line, "Though years have stretched their weary lengths between" is also more andante than adagio, while the subtlety of the dynamics are exquisitely detailed - coming over exactly as one would speak. There is never an attempt to bludgeon the listener applause, by the old technique of singing the penultimate note with screaming volume, accompanied by facial expression to give the impression that one is literally expiring with the effort. The top A's are as lovely as in any other version.

The scene switches back to Ireland and the two comic characters, Keegan and Rafferty. the latter thinks he is dying and has taken himself to bed. When Keegan reads the reports of Sean's success to Rafferty there is a delicious moment which recalls the humour of old rural Ireland. After reading the report Keegan points to the paper, and handing it to the patient, adds, "And there's a couple of lovely accidents. It would do your heart good to read them!".

With his career assured Sean returns back to Ireland and from the money raised at the concert there is sufficient to ensure that Eileen and Fergus may marry. The little scene where John calls Eileen "My little 'Eileen Alannah'" is exactly the person whom those who knew McCormack say they remember. He invites Mona and Tad to accompany him back to America now that the finances have been sorted out, and the film closes with a typical 1929 Irish country wedding, complete with 'cloche' hats.

The last scene is of the newlyweds driving away to happiness, while John McCormack  
*continued on page 2490.*



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*[John McCormack's films : continued]*

sings 'A pair of blue eyes' noted for its fine swing of the octave at the end, and of course the pianissimo top A natural which closes. The vocal range McCormack employs in the film is from bottom B to top A in almost two octaves above. The overall atmosphere of the picture can be summed up in the two lines between McCormack and O'Sullivan in the wedding scene in his cottage:

O'SULLIVAN: "I wish mother could see how happy I am."

McCORMACK: "She does, darling."

### *Wings of the Morning*

Based upon a short story "Destiny Bay" by Donn Byrne, 'Wings of the Morning', Britain's first Technicolor film, was great to look at and quite charming. - Leslie Halliwell (1979).

#### Cast: (Prologue)

Marie, daughter of Mairik, later Lady Clontarf - "Annabella"

(Suzanne Charpentier) [1909- ]

Lord Clontarf - Leslie Banks [1890 - 1952]

Mairik, King of the Gypsies - D J Williams

Valentine, as a boy, cousin of Lord Clontarf - Philip Sydney Frost

#### Cast: (Modern story)

John McCormack - Himself [1884 - 1945]

Maria, Duchess of Leyva, great grand daughter of Marie - "Annabella"

(Suzanne Charpentier) [1909- ]

Kerry Gilfallan, nephew of Sir Valentine - Henry Fonda [1905 - 1982]

Marie, Lady Clontarf, now old - Dame Irene Vanburgh [1872 - 1949]

Sir Valentine Macfarlane - Stewart Rome [1887 - 1965]

Lady Jenepher *[sic]* Macfarlane, his wife - Helen Haye [1874 - 1957]

Paddy, Sir Valentine's butler - Harry Tate [1872 - 1940]

Jimmy Cogan, footman - Mark Daly [1887 - 1957]

Don Diego, Duque de Montrael *[sic]* - Terry Underdown [1908 - ]

Angelo, a Spanish Gypsy - Sam Livesey [1873 - 1936]

Dancer - Hermione Darnborough

Steve Donoghue - Himself [1884 - 1945]

Gaumont British News racing commentators - E V H Emmett [1902 - 1971]

- Capt Robert C Lyle

Epsom racecourse tipster - 'Prince Monolulu'

Director - Harold D Schuster [1892- 1986],  
Producer - Robert T Kane, Colour director - Natalie Kalmus, Screenplay - Tom Geraghty, Story by - Donn Byrne, Technicolor photography - Ray Rennahan [1896- ], Costumes - Rene Herbert, Art director - W Ralph Brinton, Film editor - James B Clark, Musical director - Muir Mathieson, Score - Arthur Benjamin, Camera - Jack Cardiff, Asst. Director - Colin Leslie.

A New-World Pictures / 20th century Fox production.

According to the 'Daily Express' of May 11th 1936, "John McCormack, famous tenor, [is] reported to be signed by New World Productions for colour film, "Wings of the Morning" (Denham studios), and by B.I.P. for an unnamed Irish film (Elstree Studios)."

A group of gypsies are encamped at Destiny Bay, Ireland. They are threatened with expulsion by the police, but are saved by the intervention of the owner of the estate, Lord Clontarf (Leslie Banks). He declares the glen to be a home for gypsies for all time, a haven to be known as "Gypsy Rest". Following an exhibition of Gypsy dancing at the Clontarf Castle, the noble lord falls in love with Marie (played by the French leading lady whose stage name was 'Annabella', Suzanne Charpentier), daughter of the Gypsy King Mairik (DJ Williams). Clontarf later marries her and they are socially ostracised. During a hunt a few months later, Clontarf is unseated from his horse and killed. Marie leaves the castle to rejoin her people. Marik decided that the gypsies will travel to Spain, where a fortune teller predicts that four generations will pass before Marie sees Ireland again.

At this point the modern story begins after a gap of 50 years. Marie, now grown old (played now by Irene Vanburgh) has lost everything and Spain is in the throes of the Civil War. Her great grand daughter Maria, Duchess of Leyva (played by 'Annabella') is betrothed to an icy, courtly, Spanish nobleman Don Diego, Duque de Montrael. Marie promises to return to Gypsy Rest at Destiny Bay in order to find a dowry for Maria. Her last possession is a thoroughbred racehorse called "Wings of the morning". Irene Vanburgh is a positive character in the role of the Gypsy matriarch, though her accent rarely ventures west of Knightsbridge! (McCormack aficionados will know her as the hostess of his radio broadcast made on 2nd January 1942 from her home at 6, Stourcliffe Close, Stourcliffe Street, London, W.)

Meanwhile, Don Diego's estate has been attacked and he proposes flight to Portugal with Maria. She declines and travels to Ireland disguised as a boy, on her arrival at Destiny Bay she accidentally meets Sir Valentine Macfarlane, the successor to Lord Clontarf.

Here Marie and Maria meet, where the latter is enjoying herself in her boy's disguise under the name of Don Mario. As such she rides the horse 'Wings' but is soon thrown. She encounters the hero, Kerry Gilfallan, (Henry Fonda) owner of many horses, including a Derby hopeful, 'Destiny Bay'. Maria, still angry with 'Wings' swaps him for several of Kerry's horses - a poor bargain.

Marie, the owner of 'Wings' is dismayed at the exchange and sends Maria to recover the horse. Still in disguise she comes to Clontarf Castle and Kerry generously agrees to return 'Wings'. He is still aggravated with 'Don Mario's' arrogance. Dialogue ensues between the two comics Paddy (Harry Tate) and the impish footman Jimmy Cogan (Mark Daly).

Finally Marie, who is still Lady Clontarf despite her Gypsy attire, meets Sir Valentine, and they sort out the family history. This is followed by a really sensitive performance as the blind Lady Jenepher Macfarlane, from Helen Haye, a sweet natured English gentlewoman.

At last Kerry meets Maria dressed for dinner, and rather understandably falls in love at first sight. He tells Maria about a party he is giving for her with a surprise that any girl in Ireland would be proud of : an appearance by John McCormack.

Duly announced, McCormack proceeds to steal the entire scene, flashing his famous smile at the guests, while greeting them with the so familiar hearty handshake. McCormack

announces that he will sing 'Believe me, if all THESE endearing young charms' and quickly glances at the orchestra leader. One can almost hear him think "I wonder how good he is". Then follows a moment typical of the commencement of his concerts. He opens his little black leather book of lyrics very deliberately - possibly even nervously - and this sensation remains until the very second he opens his mouth to sing, it then disappears entirely.

The orchestra conducted by Muir Mathieson, consists of four violins, cello, clarinet and harp.

This performance was probably typical of the many he gave at house parties. the servants were allowed above stairs to hear the singing, and an overall feeling of well being permeates the entire atmosphere, while the quality of the singing that remains in the memory is the never ending subtle gradations of volume, and no two consecutive bars sung with quite identical dynamics. the other abiding quality is that he sings with his whole body, his head always slightly inclined to his left, and then moved quickly across to his right for extreme emphasis.

Following requests for various songs from the audience, including 'Danny Boy' (which in a career of 43 years he never sang once) and 'Come back to Erin'. The most vigorous call is for 'Killarney', and this is the high point in the film for me, as the Technicolor quality - worthy of the early 1960's - of the scenes of Killarney mirror Edmund Faconer's (1814 - 1879) lovely words: "Castle, loch and Glenna Bay, Mountain's Tore and eagle's nest, "Still at Muckross you must pray, though the friars are now at rest. They are all here.

This is one of the rare examples of all the art forms being in complete attunement. Music, lyric, landscape, seascape and cinematography in total harmony. I could watch that scene a thousand times.

At this point Don Diego arrives from London, being welcomed by Sir Valentine, who regrets that the nobleman has just missed hearing "The most glorious voice in the World." Don Diego announces to the astonished Kerry that he is engaged to Maria, while the guests return to the concert.

" One morning early as I walked forth, " By the margin of Lough Leane, ... words so familiar to McCormack collectors across the World, begin the old Kerry melody, 'The dawning of day', while the heroine indeed fulfils Patrick Weston Joyce's (1827 - 1914) very literary lyrics: "She bore the palm from Venus bright, "By the dawning of the day.

During the close of the song Maria tells Kerry about the arrangements for her marriage to Don Diego, and that it is an arranged marriage : There is no love.

McCormack recorded several songs for this film, but was dissatisfied that the producers would only do one take of each. His songs were recorded on to disc for later dubbing into the sound track.

Remarkable footage follows with the Killarney scenes, in the cinematic depiction of the mid thirties London of Edward VIII, with the Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane; where six times Derby winner, and ten times champion jockey of England, Steve Donoghue makes a cameo appearance. He agrees to ride for Kerry in the great race, and the latter very sportingly suggests that he should ride Wings, still owned by the old Gypsy. Further really splendid Technicolor shots of London include



Buckingham Palace, 'Big Ben' and Westminster Bridge, where a once much loved and familiar red and cream tram makes its stately passage across, Piccadilly Circus and Whitehall. Next follow the actual shots of London life and the High Street, Epsom, actually filmed on Derby Day, Wednesday 27th May 1936, and finally to the race course and an unforgettable gallery of characters gathered on race day, headed by that 'Prince' of tipsters in his full African regalia, Zulu Prince Monolulu. How many older readers can recall his catchphrase, 'I've got a horse. I've got a horse.'?

The principal concern is now over the survival of the dying Marie, who must as a winning owner, be alive at the end of the race. In a very exciting and close contest, Wings of the Morning wins (here there is actual footage of the 1936 Derby, won by a horse called Mahmoud in a record time of 2mins 33.8 seconds) and following a stewards' enquiry Wings victory stands. During this enquiry, Don Diego tells Maria that he will not marry her (she has 60,000 to gain if Wings wins) if he loses, Maria in disgust tells him to "please leave". With Wings victory and Marie's survival, Maria is now a wealthy woman and she proposes marriage to Kerry. He accepts.

[Editor's footnote: In his 1941 biography L.A.G. Strong wrote equally at length and in praiseworthy terms of John McCormack's first film 'Song o' My Heart'. Quoting the playwright Robert Sherwood: '... John McCormack has considerably more than a beautiful voice: he possesses an absolutely superhuman amount of good sense. That which he put into 'Song o' my heart' is no more important than is that which he kept out of it. ... Although he sings a dozen times in the picture, he imposes no strain on the audience's ear-drums. His songs are introduced casually. ... He does not sing with a mechanically broken heart: he sings only with the sincerity of an artist.' (p.251)

Strong also gives an insight into the early talkie recording technique: Regarding the song 'The rose of Tralee'. ... 'The recording of the voice here was extremely beautiful and carried off a scene which otherwise was un-distinguished by imagination or taste.

To get the quality, John turned his back upon the microphone. The recording experts set up a howl. "You're wasting our time and yours. Not a note will come through." "Let me alone. I understand my own voice." And he did, as the result showed.' (p.248). John McCormack, The story of a singer. L.A.G. Strong, Methuen & Co., London 1941.]

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## Record Review

**Amelita Galli-Curci; The complete acoustic recordings. Volume-1 (1916-1920) Romophone: 81003-2 (2 CDs), Volume-2 (1920-1924) Romophone: 81004-2 (2 CDs).**

[over 5 hours playing time]. Medium price.

It is highly commendable that the art of Galli-Curci has been transferred to CD in such chronological completeness and made more widely available in this medium so that her artistry can be more fully appreciated. The notes accompanying the discs, which in my considered opinion are some of the most complete and accurate notes around at the moment. The notes accompanying the Nimbus disc, whilst commendable for their inclusion of French and German translations are less than adequate. Other producers, of compilations, have seen fit to ignore the important items such as dates of recording at the very least, to matrix and take numbers etc. they insist on lumping together differing recordings without regard to chronology. As readers will realise from my discography in TMR No.81, Galli-Curci made many takes at widely spaced intervals of her popular recordings, consequently there are variations in her performances throughout her recording career and I feel it incumbent on any CD publisher to correctly date re-issue material. Happily the Romophone set is accurately detailed.

The transfers on these Romophone CDs are in genuine mono, not enhanced and spoiled by any artificial re-recording techniques. All the top notes are reproduced with clarity, surface noise is kept to well below any acceptable limit. I particularly liked the *Romeo and Juliette Waltz Song* (matrix C19148-1) where the transfer engineer has preserved the original sounds but has managed to lose some 'blasting' that is present on all the 78s I have heard (this has been preserved, unfortunately, on the Nimbus CD).

If you have the Nimbus CDs, I recommend that you buy at least one, if not all, of these issues from Romophone. If you are a Galli-Curci aficionado, like me, then in addition to your 78s you should consider this set to make your collection complete.

To be presented with the recordings in order is of interest and importance because it enables us to hear the development of a great artist at work. Here you will find previously unpublished items such as the duet from *Rigoletto* (mx C.21973-1), the sextet from *Lucia* with Caruso, de Lucca, Journet, Egener and Bada (mx. C.19133-1) in which the two differing takes give two very different sounds. The grouping was obviously rearranged in front of the horn, the second time the Victor engineers had achieved the correct balance with a less prominent Caruso.

The first take of *Caro Nome*, with recitative, is marred on the original Victor (November 7th., 1916) recording by a whirring noise in the background. Whilst I understand the reason for using take -1, I think that it is a pity that another take could not be found. But when viewed against the whole, this is a small but important point. All the transfers are excellently done. Other gems included are such as a portion of the *Mad Scene of Lucia*, *The Bell Song of Lakme*, *Una Voce Poco Fa*, *Ombra Leggera (Dinorah)*, *Ah Non Credea*

(*Sonnambula*), *Non So Piu (Nozze)*, *C'est l'histoire amoureuse (Manon)*, *Solveig's Song*. In quaint English - 'Home, Sweet Home', *The Last Rose of Summer*, etc. these are all beautifully sung.

The second CD explores further her repertoire from 1917 to 1920, starting with one of those air and variations so beloved by coloraturas, this by Proch. This is followed by a charming piece from *La Perle du Bresil (Charmant Oiseau)*; three arias and two duets from *La Traviata*. Two duets from *Rigoletto* with Giuseppe de Luca. Two arias from *La Sonnambula* - beautifully sung. One each from *Mignon* and *Don Pasquale*, interspersed with charming little songs probably the best of which is *Crepuscule* by Massenet, a particular favourite of mine.

### The Second volume

In Volume two we start with another take (-3) of *Qui la Voce (Puritani)* demonstrating that, even to audiences of 1917, that there was still currency in the 'old war-horses' of Grisi and Jenny Lind. Next right up to date with a piece by Rimsky-Korsakov (*Le Coq d'or: Hymne au Soleil*) which at that time had not yet been premiered in USA. This is followed by another set of variations 'Ah Vous Dirai Je Maman' with flute accompaniment, 'Un Bel Di Vedremo' (*Madama Butterfly*), back through time for Meyerbeer's *L'etoil du nord*, the second part of *Lucia's Mad Scene*, *O Luce di Quest Anima (Linda)*, *La Sonnambula* and then right up to date with Victor Herbert from 'Orange Blossoms' and 'Mlle. Modiste' lovely little songs such as *Ol' Carlina*; Henry Bishop's 'Echo Song', Stephen Foster's 'Old Folks at Home'; Molloy's 'Love's Old Sweet Song'; Dank's 'Silver Threads Among the Gold'. Truly 76 minutes of sheer entertainment and delight.

The second CD in this second volume has two pieces from *Il Trovatore* which today we associate with more dramatic voices such as Callas, *Tacea la Notte Placida...* *Di Tale Amore* and *D'Amore Sull Alle Rosee*, Galli-Curci does not exactly fill the phrases with drama, but certainly feeling and shading is there. A piece by Massenet (*Don Cesar de Bazan*) is easier for her with its trills and runs. There is a lovely rendering of *Obsessions* from *Manon* and then we are back to *Dinorah (Si Carina)*, some Rossini with *Bel Raggio (Semiramide)* this was an unpublished take by Victor, but I fail to understand why this was. A spirited rendering of *Ah Non Guinge (Sonnambula)* takes us into a series of five duets with a tenor possessed of a beautiful, flexible, voice an ideal match with Galli-Curci's own flexibility: Tito Schipa. There are two from *Traviata* - *Un Di Felice* and *Parigi O Cara*; sung with such feeling. The duet from scene two of *Lucia* - *Verrano a Te*, simply heart rending, *E Il Sol Dell Anima* from *Rigoletto* and finally my favourite Donizetti duo from *Don Pasquale* - *Tournami A Dir*. Among the songs are some uncommon to me but beautiful to hear - the *Serenade* by Pierne, *Mah Lindy Lou*, *Say A Little Prayer*, *Coppelia Waltz*, *Memory Lane*, and to finish with we have the favourite *Estrelita: The Little Star*.

As I said before, if you want to hear Galli-Curci as she should be heard: buy these CDs, I doubt that you'll hear better, and in good old monophonic sound. I look forward to the rest of the series.

Paul Hartup.



## Diary 1994

The TMR sales desk will be in attendance at those events shown in bold type, most of these are advertised within *TMR* and you are referred to the adverts for full details. Other events may be included for information only. Please do check with the organizers of any event listed before setting out on a long journey. TMR can not accept responsibility for any changes made or cancellations made to any details after going to press. If you wish us to supply specific back numbers etc at any fair attended, please contact us to ensure that stocks are available for you.

### February

6th Wimbledon, Grandstand Lounge, Plough Lane, SW17. Early adm. £2.50 (9.30am); 70p (11.30am). B Wilkinson, 0689 846516

### March

13th Birmingham International, National Motorcycle Museum, junction 6: M42/A45. £2.50 (10am); £1 after noon. D Spruce, 0923 237794 [NB: There is a 'pop' record fair on this day over the road at the NEC.!] ]

20th Fairfields Hall Croydon, £2.50 (9.30am); 75p (11.30am). Rob Marsden, 081 660 0407

### April

16th Sixth National Phonofair, Northampton, 10am - 4pm. Ruth Lambert, 0604 405184

### 24th Wimbledon Grandstand

Lounge, Plough Lane, SW17. Early adm. £2.50 (9.30am); 70p (11.30am). B Wilkinson, 0689 846516

### May

15th NEC Birmingham, Third National Vintage Communications Fair, 10.30am J Hill 0398 331532

June : No entries

### July

10th Wimbledon Grandstand Lounge, Plough Lane, SW17. Early adm. £2.50 (9.30am); 70p (11.30am). B Wilkinson, 0689 846516

### 24th Birmingham International,

National Motorcycle Museum, junction 6: M42/A45. £2.50 (10am); £1 after noon. D Spruce, 0923 237794

August : No entries

### September

11th Wimbledon Grandstand Lounge, Plough Lane, SW17. Early adm. £2.50 (9.30am); 70p (11.30am). B Wilkinson, 0689 846516

### October

2nd Birmingham International, National Motorcycle Museum, junction 6: M42/A45. £2.50 (10am); £1 after noon. D Spruce, 0923 237794

November : No entries

### December

4th Wimbledon Grandstand Lounge, Plough Lane, SW17. Early adm. £2.50 (9.30am); 70p (11.30am). B Wilkinson, 0689 846516

Correct as at: 22/1/1994. E&OE.

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## The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra

- a new CD of their recordings of music re-creating the elegance and swing of the great dance orchestras of the golden age of British dance music: the late twenties through to the early forties is now available.

Michael Law, himself a *TMR* subscriber, said "I founded The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra in 1988. Although each of the musicians and singers in the orchestra is one of the best in the country. The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra is just that - an orchestra, with a great sound of its own, not a group of twelve soloists. I have great admiration for the musicians and singers in the orchestra, all of whom are devoted to the sophisticated yet jazzy music we play. I hope that you can detect this in the toe tapping performances on this album and that you will enjoy listening and dancing to the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra for many years to come." We certainly echo that remark and having heard this CD ourselves found our toes tapping just as much as Michael said we would.

The 21 tracks were recorded at Abbey Road Studios on July 19 and 26, 1993, thus proving the kind of discipline associated with the best of the pre-war bands. Although the pre-war bands didn't have the advantages of "Digital Editing at Finesplice Studios", but without asking their General Manager, Alan Bennett, about this aspect of their album, I hazard a guess that these days it is cheaper to resort to a bit of post recording digital editing than have three or four takes in Abbey Road Studios. In any case, I have no doubts - the result is excellent and of a consistently high standard. And as "The Busker" wrote in *Melody Maker* March 1931 'Who said that dance music is dead?'. For those interested the line up is Steve Baker, Martin Etheridge (trumpets), Alistair Allan (trombone), Kyle Horsch, Sean McWilliam (altos and clarinets), Martin Dunsdon (tenor/soprano sax and clarinet), Melanie Bush (tenor/baritone sax and clarinet), Dave Berry (double bass and tuba), Dave Holmes (guitar and banjo), Steve Williams (drums and percussion), Michael Law (pno, vcl, cond. and arr.), Stacey Kent, Danielle Carson, Julia Shore, vcls.).

The tracks in this 1 hour 6 minutes album are: *Forty Second Street* (vcls. SK & ML); *There's A Small Hotel* (vcls: DC & ML); *Take A Number From One To Ten* (vcl: JS); *You're The Top* (vcl: ML); *Isn't This A Lovely Day?* (vcl: DC & ML); *It's D'Lovely* (vcls: JS & ML); *I Got Rhythm* (vcl: JS); *Music, Maestro, Please!* (vcls: DC & ML); *Happy Days Are Here Again* (vcls: DC & Qrt); *I'm In The Mood For Love* (vcl: JS); *Shall We Dance?* (vcls: JS & ML); *Play Me An Elegant Song* (vcls: JS & ML); *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen* (vcls: JS & ML); *A Nice Cup Of Tea* (vcls: SK & ML); *Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now* (vcl: ML); *An Apple For The Teacher* (vcl: SK & ML); *I'm Building Up To An Awful Let Down* (vcl: JS & ML); *I'm Singin' A Swing Song Now* (vcl: JS); *On Your Toes* (vcl: SK & ML); *Somebody Stole My Gal* (vcl: ML); *Happy Feet* (vcl: Trio). Tracks 12 and 18 are credited to "Law" and as I haven't heard them before, I assume they are by Michael himself; certainly they are both well sung and played period pieces. Bravo! Mr Law and the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra. Catalogue details: T.E.R. Limited, CDVIR 8326 (5 015062 832624.), "Shall We Dance?" The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra Conducted by Michael Law, is available by post for £??? direct from The Piccadilly Dance Orchestra, 19 Burlington Gardens, London W3 6BA (Telephone 081 992 1911). John W Booth

## Memories of The BBC Light Programme.

No doubt there are other 'old fogies' like myself who recall the days in this country when for a choice of wireless programmes we just had the BBC "National Programme" and the BBC "Regional Programme", both of which transmitted from 10.15 a.m. until midnight. In those days, too, any programme could transmit any type of music. This was advantageous because one could become acquainted with all types and grow up with quite a knowledge of music and its artists unwittingly. World War II changed many things. Lots of old prejudices and modes of living were dramatically washed away with the tides as it were. So, on 29th July, 1945 the 'Light Programme' was introduced. While serving listening of a light nature, types of music were not so rigidly segregated as nowadays.

Looking at the contents below we have a representation of things that could be heard, but comedy is neglected. This collection is NOT based upon those items most frequently heard but is a cross section of the Light Programme. The oldest item is "Skirts" sung by Sam Browne with Billy Cotton's Band, being very typical of the fun that Mr Cotton created over many years.

The most recent is Dame Vera Lynn's "It hurts to say goodbye" from 1967 (staggering me to recall that I have a "Crown" record of her recorded as a teenager in 1935). In 1962 Shelia Southern brought us "White Wedding" - and I heard her singing recently in Bournemouth with the Don Lusher Big Band. Also still with us, who I heard singing a month or so ago with the Freddie Staff Big Band, is Dennis Lotis who in 1958 gave us "Good Mornin' Life". The great majority of artists chosen here are from The British Isles. In the spirit of the Light Programme policy. We enjoyed 'back then' a wide variety of what has become known as 'Light Music'. In this compilation we have the orchestras of Charles Williams, Jack Coles, Fred Hartley, Charles Shadwell, George Melachrino, Peter Yorke, Sidney Torch, Frank Chacksfield, Frank Cordell, Eric Jupp and Alyn Ainsworth. One wonders why all this type of pleasant music has been cast aside these days. The "King of light music" contributes his own "Calling all workers" which was inspired by hearing his wife Phyllis's footsteps going into the distance one morning as she left home to go to her wartime job. Russ Conway plays "China Tea" in his typically jaunty pianistic style. Accompanied by Wally Stott's orchestra, mouth-organ wizard Max Geldray plays "Crazy Rhythm". The Light Programme helped Shirley Bassey along in her early career, as it did Frankie Howerd, who hasn't time on a 78rpm disc to develop a real sketch, nor have the "Take It From Here" team in "Little Red Monkey" a hit from April 1953. Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren combine in the scene of the infatuated patient and doctor - "Goodness gracious me!". Donald Peers was already experienced at Radio Normandie and on "Eclipse" records before being heard on the Light Programme. I am disappointed by the selection chosen to exemplify Reginald Dixon. While musically right - it is untypical of his usual work and sound, and the item sung by Bobby Breen unfortunately shows that he did not make the transition from boy wonder to adult singer. It is good to hear Victor Sylvester, who did monumental work for ballroom dancing, play "You're dancing on my heart", beside which Geraldo demonstrates that British bands could "Swing" as well as those of any other nation by

an interpretation of "The galloping comedians". So, in the same way as "Two - way family favourites" we have a very generous compilation of the items that used to delight us.... 53 "tunes" in all to make this a recommended programme.

**CD ONE** 1. "Housewife's Choice" sig. tune - In Party Mood - Charles Williams Conc. Orch. 2. Isn't life wonderful - Alma Cogan & Les Howard w. Peter Knight Singers. 3. China Tea - Russ Conway. 4. Brazil - Geoff Love's Latin American Rhythm Orch.. 5. White Wedding - Shelia Southern w. the Mike Sammes Singers. 6. Jungle Fantasy - Reg Dixon - Organ of the Tower Blackpool. 7. "Music While You Work" sig. tune - Calling All Workers - Eric Coates & Symph. Orch.. 8. Parakeets and Peacocks - Jack Coles Orch. 9. Cascade of Stars - Fred Hartley and his Music. 10. Crazy Rhythm - Max Geldray with Wally Stott's Orch.. 11. Good Mornin' Life - Dennis Lotis w. Tony Osborne Orch.. 12. Dancer at the Fair - Charles Shadwell Orch.. 13. It Hurts to Say Goodbye - Vera Lynn w. Orch. cond. by Reg Guest. 14. First Rhapsody - The Melachrino Orch. 15. Laura - Roberto Inglez Orch.. 16. English As She Is Spoken - Frankie Howerd & Billy Ternent's Orch.. 17. June is Bustin' Out All Over - Billy Ternent's Orch. vcl Bobby Breen. 18. Portuguese Party - The Pro Arte Orch. cond. Geo Weldon. 19. You Are My First Love - Ruby Murray w. Ray Martin. 20. Victor Sylvester's - You're Dancing On My Heart - Victor Sylvester's Ballroom Orch.. 21. I'm Going To See You Today - Joyce Grenfell. 22. Running Off The Rails - Columbia Orch.. 23. Skits - Billy Cotton, vcl Sam Browne. 24. Cresta Run - Sidney Torch's Orch.. 25. Luck Be A Lady - Edmund Hockridge with Orch.. 26. "Anchors Aweigh" - Peter Yorke Orch.: We Hate to Leave; I Fall In Love Too Easily; All Of A Sudden My Heart Sings; What Makes the Sunset; I Begged Her. 27. "The Archers" sig., Barwick Green - Sidney Torch's Orch.. **CD TWO** 1: "Pick of the Pops" sig.- At The Sign of The Swinging Cymbal - Brian Faye's Orch.. 2: Once In A Lifetime - Shirley Bassey with Johnnie Spence Orch.. 3: Nicola - Steve Race's Orch.. 4: Goodness Gracious Me - Peter Sellers & Sophia Loren w. Ron Goodwin's Orch.. 5: "Paul Temple" sig.- Coronation Scot - Queen's Hall Light Orch. cond. Sidney Torch. 6: Lovely Day - Frank Chacksfield's Singing Strings. 7: I Can Dream Can't I? - Eve Boswell with Geraldo 8: The Galloping Comedian - Geraldo 9: Little Red Monkey - Joy Nicholls, Dick Bentley & Jimmy Edwards w. Frank Chacksfield's Orch.. 10: "Sports Report" sig. - Out Of The Blue - Band of The Irish Guards. 11: Music! Music! Music! - Donald Peers. 12: The Typewriter - Chas Williams Conc. Orch.. 13: In Love For The Very First Time - Jean Carson, vcl grp & orch. cond. Reg Owen. 14: Mediterranean Concerto - Semprini, & George Melachrino Orch.. 15: But Beautiful - Alma Cogan w. Geof Love Orch.. 16: How Little We Know - Matt Monro w. Johnnie Spence Orch.. 17: Mon Pays - Frank Cordell Orch. 18: Penny Serenade - Ronnie Hilton, chorus & Orch. cond. Frank Cordell. 19: "Dick Barton - Special Agent" - Devil's Galop - Chas Williams Conc. Orch.. 20: "Radio Newsreel" - Imperial Echoes - Band of the RAF. 21: Waltzing In The Clouds - Max Jaffa & Palm Court Orch. w. Reg Kilby & Jack Byfield. 22 Song of the trees - Anne Shelton 23 Say it with Music - Jack Payne Orch. 24 Spanish Serenade - Sid Phillips 25 "Music for Sweethearts" - Eric Jupp Orch. 26 Bedtime for drums - Alyn Ainsworth Orch. EMI CDEM (CD) / TCEM (Tape) 1506 E.B.



## President Kennedy in Ireland

On 22nd November, 1963, two men died thousands of miles apart. One was my own grandfather aged 92 who had succeeded in a difficult life, the other was John F. Kennedy a young President of the USA who had the promise of many more years in in or out of office. In June, 1963, he visited Ireland, the land of his ancestry, where he received a welcome that has rarely been equalled. During that time he responded to the Irish people in speeches that were recorded by Radio Telefis Eireann. The days in Ireland were extremely busy and crowded for him but he obviously enjoyed them with their opportunity to meet the people wherever he went.

EMI have issued a CD of these recordings, it opens with an address to a joint meeting of the Dail and Seanad of Ireland, a highlight of which was his presentation of one of the flags presented originally to the 'Irish Brigade' after a daring and bloody assault on the Confederate lines during the United States Civil War at Fredericksburg.

Other speeches were made at New Ross, Co. Wexford, from whence his great-grandfather came, at the memorial to John Barry in Wexford, accepting the Freedom of Cork, accepting honorary degrees from The National University and Trinity College, accepting the freedoms of Galway and Limerick and upon departing from Shannon Airport.

In each speech President Kennedy stressed that the voice of a small nation could influence world opinion - as exemplified by Ireland throughout the ages, either from inside that land itself or by the part played by its citizens who had settled in other places, especially in the USA. It is perhaps an indictment of British policy historically that so many Irish were forced by poverty to leave their native land, only to enrich those to which they went.

Over the years, the gramophone and phonograph have played a role of custodian of history by preserving the voices of the well-known. Sadly, so many who recorded upon wax suffered a fate equal to death because that material was so fragile and venerable to 'fungus'. One assumes that the voice of President Kennedy remains upon film, tape and perhaps 'gramophone records' as well as this CD. Fortunately the world now knows much more on the preservation of recordings.

This CD is intended in voices of history and for reference libraries, being clearly recorded despite the varying locations at which the speeches were delivered. EMI is to be complimented for deciding to give this item wider distribution. EMI CD EMC3664 or 8-8059-2.

E. Bayly.

## John McDermott

### "Danny Boy"

Tenor John McDermott, an immigrant into Canada as a boy with his family in 1965 compiled this collection in 1992 as a 'Thank You' to his parents upon their 50th Wedding Anniversary, from among their favourite songs.

I would class Mr McDermott as a microphone singer rather than a concert singer, by which I do NOT infer that his presentation is in 'pop' fashion. Far from it. It is a pleasantly relaxed style with light accompaniment by small groups. Having stood looking at the grim mass graves at Leningrad (as it was called then), the long rows of crosses at San Diego, the sunken USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor, and recalling the photograph of a military grave in France where

lies an uncle I never saw, and knowing what has occurred since both 'World Wars' it is obvious to me that no war really achieved anything. John McDermott sings some very telling songs in this collection on that subject. 'The Green Fields of France' reflects upon the cross for a 19 year old slain in 1916, 'And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda' reminds us of terrible events at Gallipoli where many Australians and Turkish were mown down, 'The Faded Coat of Blue' paints a scene of the American Civil War.

'Christmas In The Trenches' tells the strange but true story of when Germans and British met in "no man's land" to sing carols, exchange gifts before returning to their trenches to resume the killing the next day... the moral being that we must ignore politicians and 'war-lords' who stir up hatred against another nation, race, or faith.

But the whole collection is not of war. We have 'Loch Lomond', 'The Last Rose of Summer', 'The Rose of Tralee', 'The Minstrel Boy', 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Danny Boy' as well as 'The Old House' made famous by John McCormack. But even more important are the fine notes accompanying the songs giving us their origin and history researched by Judith Adair.

However I feel that this gentle recital would have been enhanced from the inclusion of a few spirited songs sprinkled along the way. The playing time of 62 minutes would have allowed for this by British standards which frequently exceed 75 minutes. So if you like these songs presented in this manner you will enjoy this disc.

EMI CD EMC3666 - 8 28044 2. E.Bayly.

## Peter Sellers

The entertainment world occasionally throws up giant geniuses above the general already excellent standard of the time. Peter Sellers was one such who could adapt himself to many roles. He was in numerous films (at one time Bob Hope inferred that any British film without Sellers was experimental!), as well as radio shows. He was an excellent satirist and mimic with a variety of withering 'attacks' and exposures of funny situations in everyday life. I think that it is time that a compilation of the 'complete' Sellers was issued. We had the The Peter Sellers Collection as a double cassette release [ECC.5] presenting 38 of his sketches giving full rein to his wide range of different voices. Some of these, produced as two tracks stereo, allowed him to be two characters simultaneously. The sales of this must have been encouraging as as EMI have now released a 4 CD set titled a Celebration of Sellers which extends the number of sketches available to 67. Still yet not a complete set, but an improved situation. Obviously if you have the cassette collection, there is much here that you lack.

The double cassettes were reviewed in one of our earlier issues so I need only point to a few of the fresh items. *Jakka and the Flying Saucers (An Interplanetary Tale)*, takes us into the world of such radio serials and films of 1953. Sophia Loren conspired in such sketches as *To Keep My Love Alive*; *I Fell In Love With An Englishman*; *Ukulele Lady*; and *Oh! Lady be Good*. He made several lampoons of songs written by Lennon and McCartney of The Beatles - including five versions of *She Loves You* of which this CD presents those subtitled - The Chinless wonder, Cockney version, and Inspired by Phil McCafferty, the Irish dentist. *The All-England George Formby Finals*, has remakes of several of George Formby's well

known songs, including - *They're Parking Camels Where The Taxis Used To Be*, (which we hope George would have loved). *The Cultural Scene* involves the Compleat Guide To Accents of The British Isles - featuring *Don't Cry For me Argentina*, Irene Handl joins in on *The Whispering Giant*. Although previously unissued *We'll Meet Again* was truly prophetic as far as Peter Seller's recordings are concerned. The 4 CD set includes a 24 page booklet with rare photographs, recording history and details of his film career.

EMI (4CDs) SELLERS 1. E Bayly.

Issued quite separately were short play CDs of Peter Sellers which we assume were aimed at the popular market. Somewhat confusingly they have similar numbers CDEMS.293 for the first and CDEM.293 for the second of a two part set. The first part is also numbered 8 81016 2, - [at last a use for the second number!] - tracks are: *A Hard Day's Night*, *She Loves You - Twit's version* (available ONLY on this CD), and *Can't Buy Me Love*. This CD is packaged in a double CD case the size of a single CD case, with space for a second CD. The second CD - CDEM.293 - but having its own reference of 8 81036 2 is packaged in a card slip case similar to those of CD singles, but based upon the designs of Lp and EP covers. Its tracks are *A Hard Day's Night* (a variant of the track on the first CD), *Help!*, *Yes It Is* (previously unreleased), *She Loves You -Dr Strangelove version*. The two versions of *Hard Day's night* are slightly different. If you decide to purchase both CDs you are then left with a decision: either keep both CDs in their respective packages, or transfer the second CD to the standard plastic CD case of the first one and leave the empty second CD sleeve to its own devices. What you can't do is put the second CD and its sleeve in the first CD case, it is too big. [I can see the next generation of collectors wondering why various empty sleeves keep turning up, and writing letters to whom so ever the editor is of TMR at that time asking questions and equally 'informed' readers and 'experts' putting forward their theories in reply. -Ed.] EMI CDs a: CDEMS.293 [8 81016 2], b: CDEM.293 [8 81036 2]. J.W.B. and E.B.

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# Record reviews

**Walter Widdop Tenor 1892-1949.**

**Maurice Robson's Voices from the Past. WW100**

Cassette available from Maurice Robson, 280 Huddersfield Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 0PF - £4.99 (including postage in UK).

The tenor Walter Widdop was born on the 19th April 1892 in a farm cottage, in Norlop a small village in Calderdale, near Halifax, Yorkshire. It was in this area that he first sang, as a baritone, in Sunday School concerts such favourites of the time as *The Banderero* and *The Village Blacksmith*. After leaving school he worked for a time in the once prosperous Yorkshire wool industry at a dye house in Sowerby Bridge. He was coached by the well-known Halifax teacher Arthur Hinchcliffe and gathered many first prizes at musical festivals.

At the age of thirty he went to London and sang for Percy Pitt and Norman Allin, studying for a short period with Dinh Gilly.

In 1923 Pitt invited him to join the British National Opera Company - for which he (Widdop) had to provide the considerable sum of £400 to benefit from membership of B.N.O. Fortunately he was able to obtain sponsorship from his former employers, the Bradford Dyer's Association.

His first part with BNO was Radames in *Aida* on 5 October 1923 on the stage of The Theatre Royal, Leeds, Yorkshire. He toured with B.N.O. throughout the British Isles until 1929. His debut at Covent Garden took place on the 25th January 1924, as part of the Winter B.N.O.C. season in the title role of Sigfried, Florence Austral, as Brunnhilde, was forced to abandon the performance after the second act due to ill health; Widdop and the rest of the company then performed the first act of *Die Walkur*. He also appeared on various concert and festival platforms in Britain and the USA. He sang at the Teatro Liceo, in the Barcelona International season in 1927 and at concerts at the Hague, Amsterdam, and in Germany.

His Covent Garden Opera Syndicate 'Grand Opera' season debut as Rinaldo in *Armide* took place on Tuesday May 1st, 1928 singing with Frida Leider, who described him as 'excellent'. On 25th June 1929 he appeared there as Bagoas in the world premiere of *Judith* by Goosens, this obscure opera of one hour duration played only two performances. Goosens remarked afterwards that only the singers and musicians had performed professionally. Although perhaps now remembered best for his oratorio repertoire, his Wagnerian interpretations were considered to be the best in Britain. Other leading parts were in *Aida*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Il Trovatore* and Ralph Vaughn Williams' two act ballad opera, *Hugh The Drover*.

His recordings in the HMV catalogue include - *Faust* [D1887], *Lohengrin* [D1353], *Maritania* [D1887], *Rhinegold* [D1546], *Tannhauser - The Pilgrim's Chorus*, [D1074], *Tristan and Isolde* [D1413-7], *Valkyrie* [D1320-8], *Parsifal* [D1651-2], *Sound An Alarm*, and *Thou Shalt Break Them* [D1886] of these two recordings John Steane commented that Widdop was a ... "singer with a sturdy, virile voice, useful and often recorded in Wagner, and able to do full

justice to the broad, second-empire manner of Gounod in the air from *The Queen Of Sheba*" [D1742], *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*, *The Choral*, and *Bach's Mass in B Minor* [C1725].

At the age of 56 he was singing Aegisthus in *Elektra*, just over one year later he died (9th September 1949) from a heart attack suffered after singing *Lohengrin's Farewell* in a Promenade Concert in the Royal Albert Hall, London, the previous evening.

Yorkshireman Maurice Robson has produced a cassette of fourteen of Widdop's HMV recordings. The presentation of the cassette is very well done, the reproduced colour photograph, the track listing notes - all too often missing with other privately published cassettes - just the little things that so often mar other good products. This is well done and a well balanced programme well worth £4.99

I hope for its success, I certainly will tell my opera friends about it. The recordings date from 1926 to 1930 and were therefore all electrically recorded.

*The Death of Nelson* (Braham)

A well known ballad of the early nineteenth century, first performed as part of the opera *The Americans* in 1811 by the tenor John Braham. It is said that at one performance he was so moving Lady Hamilton fainted during the second verse. Nice to hear it brought out again by a well produced voice with excellent diction. [D.1833]

*Tom Bowling* (Dibdin)

A popular Victorian ballad, this beautiful elegiac melody is excellently sung - especially in his middle voice with some lushious top notes. [D.1833]

*Daylight is Fading Away* (Borodin)

A very pleasing song previously unknown to me, but I am glad to make its acquaintance. It is full of light and shade with expression; once again proving that large voices can sing with marvellous feeling. So expressive and beautiful. [D.1353]

*If With All Your Hearts / Then Shall The Righteous Shine* (Mendelssohn)

From the notoriously difficult oratorio *Elijah* (I speak from personal experience), this beautiful voice has all the controlled power to encompass the high notes, phrases and the middle tones (which is the 'home' of the voice) blending each note with the next, in a marvellous experience of singing equal to the so called best Italian tenors. Not without cause was Walter Widdop called England's own *Heldentenor* - the King of Song. [E.566]

*Comfort Ye My People / Every Valley Shall Be Exalted*. (Handel)

Some very pleasing and well controlled piano notes in *Comfort Ye*. I could imagine being very reassured by this comforting message. Oratorio of course is not easy to sing - the diction is all here - one remembers listening enthralled to the 78s of Elsie Suddaby, Isobel Baillie and Heddle Nash, to name but three a feast nay banquet of song - with the king Walter Widdop - truly wonderful. [D.1620]

*Thou Shalt Break Them* (Handel)

Again a very clear diction wedded to a marvellously smooth, dramatic voice well suited to oratorio. The difficult florid decorations are very cleanly done, the whole work is well executed. [D.1886]

*Sound An Alarm* (Handel)

The 'grand sound' of Handel needs a good, steady, well schooled voice - clean, clarion sounding to do it justice. We have here an abundance of voice, you get the impression that

there is no strain, he is singing well within his capabilities - splendid! [D.1886]

*Lend Me Your Aid*

From Gounod's opera *The Queen of Sheba*, not often heard today, but I must confess I love to sit back and listen to the great waves of sound enfolding me - so free from strain that you know there will be no slips - just pure enjoyment. A marvellous sing! [D.1742]

*Morning Was Gleaming* (Wagner)

Walther's prize song from *Die Meistersingers*. This is indeed a prize song, hearing it I could believe that outside morning was indeed gleaming wonderful (I was listening at midnight). [D.2053]

*O Vision Entrancing* (Goring Thomas)

As I had never heard this item before I was eager to do so. It made a refreshing change and it displayed some well sung recitative. The top notes are well produced and well controlled, just what we have come to expect from this master of controlled singing. The excerpt is, I think, worthy of more publicity. [D.2053]

*All Hail Thou Dwelling* (Faust)

Sung here in English, (normally I prefer the aria sung in its original French language) I found this excerpt a refreshing change with the neat singing such a contrast to the overblown, blustering, popularist, (and dare I add overweight?) tenors of today. Very good, excellent. [D.1887]

*Yes Let Me Like A Soldier Fall* (Wallace)

From the popular English opera *Maritana*, first performed at Drury Lane in November 1845. Full of wonderful tunes it is a jewel box of vocal music - today unfortunately unknown; an example of the marvellous diction popular with Victorian audiences. The whole compass of the voice is used with mastery in turns both dramatic and moving. It certainly moved me and I now know what it was that moved those Victorian audiences. [D.1887]

This voice is in the line of British tenors from Edward Lloyd, Ben Davies, Sims Reeves etc. I was entertained by this well produced voice that has been brought back for us by Mr Robson from the doldrums that it has been languishing in. It has been dusted off and presented in this convenient cassette form. It is well produced and the attention to detail such as his notes is so very welcome. I do hope that more forgotten English singers are to be given this treatment and brought back to notice. It has been a pleasure to listen to such a beautiful voice singing old favourites and some new, pleasant, surprises. A great pity that the singer never stayed around longer to give us more recordings. Dare we hope that Mr Robson will dig up more Widdop or some others of his beloved Yorkshire singers. Well done.!

PAUL HARTUP.

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## Book Reviews

### Arthur Badrock

#### The Banjo On Record - a bi-discography; edited by Uli Heier and Rainer E Lotz.

Published by Greenwood Press, Inc. 88 Post Road West, Westport, Conn. USA. \$75.00. Available in Britain from all good bookshops at £61.50. [The reader's attention is drawn to the disparity in the Pound-Dollar conversion. As we write this, \$75.00 at tourist rates is £50.00 (\$1.50/1), which, even allowing for shipping costs, makes the UK price seem steep. - A.B. and Ed.]

Many years ago Brian Rust started a card index file on banjo recordings and when I first saw it on one of my visits I thought what a fascinating publication it would make. The card index progressed to an unpublished discography which was subsequently taken over by Messrs Heier and Lotz and their hard work together with the input from various collectors has resulted in this very detailed and comprehensive volume.

As Brian Rust explains in his foreword, in the early days of recording the banjo came over much better than many other instruments because of its ringing sound and percussive character. As this was also the period when ragtime began to be heard by a wider public we are fortunate to have a wealth of recordings of ragtime compositions played by the finest American and European banjo players.

It is not until you browse through this book that you realise just how many banjo recordings were made before the turn of the century and in the first few years after.

The compilers set out to document all solo and duet recordings, plus recordings made by banjo bands - right up to the Big Ben Banjo Band of the 1950s. They have also made a start on listing vocal recordings where the banjo occupies a prominent part in the accompaniment and also jazz and dance band recordings which feature a banjo solo. Country and ethnic artists also appear in the book and I was pleased to see discographies of artists such as Uncle Dave Macon and the Flanagan brothers.

The main strength of the book is in the discographies of such pioneers as Vess Ossman, Fred Van Epps, Olly Oakley and Charlie Rogers. A potted biography is included for each artist which always I think adds considerably to the interest of a discography.

The book also includes two interesting articles on the history of the banjo in America and the history of the banjo in the recording industry. In addition there are many pages of photographs of record labels. A six page bibliography and a tune title index are yet more reasons why this is the most interesting and valuable discographical publication of the year.

Any weaknesses? Well, I am not happy that the compilers do not always show the origin of a recording even though they undoubtedly know it. For example under Bill Black we find 3587A Never Gwine To Ramble No More recorded July-August 1929, New York City and issued on Goodson 174. The inexperienced collector would assume that Goodson was the original issue and might even conclude that it was an American label. It is of course a Grey Gull recording and "GG untraced" would have made it quite clear to all readers and would also have indicated to them that if they wanted the recording it might also be found on various American issues. In fact I have a note that it appeared on Grey Gull 4285 possibly as Bill

Black and/or Jack Fitts and it was also on Sunrise as Ed Merrill.

Similarly on page 47 under Banjo (Ariel) are details of three anonymous Ariel issues by Olly Oakley. All details including matrix numbers and recording dates are given but there is no indication for the novice collector that these are from Zonophone. The full details appear under Oakley and I would have expected to find the three Ariels listed on page 47 with a simple note that the details could be found under Olly Oakley for the specific dates. This would have cut out duplication and confusion. There are other instances where this occurs.

These are however minor irritations in what is a most splendid book, and incidentally hardback and well bound. One collector has already told me that as an added bonus it has helped date many of the early obscure non-banjo records in his collection.

It is unusual to review a discographical work by the Vice Speaker of the German SPD parliamentary group and the head of the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation. Over here most discographers I know are retired deadbeats like myself! [Offended discographer friends of Arthur should write direct to him to complain! I can't think of any British elected politician who shares our hobby, let alone falls into the discographer category. -Ed.]

ARTHUR BADROCK.

### DISCOGRAPHIE der Deutschen Tanzmusik, vol 2.

#### Ernie Bayly

Available from: Birgit Lotz Verlag, Jean Paul Strasse 6, Bonn 53173, Germany price 100DM plus post & packing at 4 DM for Germany, 6 DM for rest of EU. Worldwide airmail add 20 DM.

The second volume of the Discography of German Dance Music is now published. Its author Rainer E. Lotz includes a further selection of 'groups' alphabetically. As previously explained, while each volume is arranged alphabetically, Dr. Lotz's work is published as he is able to COMPLETE a listing of artists. In this way someone whose work is elusive does not delay the publication of lists of those of those whom he has complete knowledge. again, some 'groups' had masses of recordings but others recorded only a few tunes.

Collectors will not be suprised to learn that 115 pages of this 555 - page volume are devoted to Marek Weber and Dr. Lotz was brave to undertake listing the work of such a prolific recording artist who was first committed to wax in October, 1913 and who continued until c.1948 in USA. Numerous of the sessions, while having the usual heading 'Marek Weber & his Orchestra' have a note of its type, e.g. dance orchestra, salon orch., tango orch., 28 musicians, etc. presumably as described in the recording ledgers. where there is no such indication, the title and composer serve as a guide. As in the previous volume and those of the "Kleinkunst" books names of most composers and lyricists are given. Possibly one has been puzzled by the letter prefixes for Gramophone Company recordings. Some engineers used different letters from those they had in Britain. The German Usage was-

L CL BL = D. LARTER

W. CW BW = A. LAWRENCE

D CD BD = R.E. BECKETT

N CN BN = S.E. TUNN

K CK BK = G. DILNUTT

The prefix R (For example CLR or BLR) indicates that the music was relayed to the Electrola studio by a telephone land line system. Weber's music encompassed an extremely wide field which must have pleased everybody at some juncture. The paraphrases of the main arias, entr'actes, etc from the well-known operas recalled their music to those insufficiently committed to buy complete sets of records was an important service.

It must be remembered that Marek Weber was a violinist, and it is understandable that his first recordings were in that capacity leading "Streich Quartet" but it was not until his 1914 recordings for Anker that there was a chance to hear him in Britain on Coliseum/Scala/Tower records. Thereafter a steady stream of Parlophon records did not come to Britain. When he recorded on 7th sept 1927, "Tales from the Vienna Woods" with matrix BW294/5 it became HMV B2406. From then, Britain enjoyed a large proportion of his recordings until 19th Oct 1935 with B8788 "None but the weary heart" and C2822 a selection from "The Chocolate Soldier". His last recording in Berlin was on 21st. Dec. 1932 and his first in London was 11th. Jan. 1933 where he continued to record until going to the USA where his recording began on 3rd. Dec. 1941

During those years he provided a veritable feast of music, chiefly of the "light orchestral" type now greatly prized as an almost - lost art, so that this part of the volume fills an important need for its lovers. being a long run of recording dates it provides a guide to dating the work of others. Of course you may question the inclusion of Marek Weber in this type of book. He did record some dance music. Being such an important and popular artist I feel it very useful to have all of his records listed in one place.... And this is it.

Of major importance in the world of early ballroom - dancing as we know it today was the orchestra of the Palais de Danse in Berlin, although few of its records were released in Britain. It was directed by Giorgi Vintilescu. Its first recording was "Valse Boston" in the Berlin studio of Gramophone on 6th. Nov. 1911, which was released here on HMV B183. A few days later "Liebtanz und Lachendwe Lieb" eventually came on HMV C277. From 1911 onwards we had some on Beka, Favorite, Dacapo, Homochord, Coliseum, Scala, Parlophon, Pilot, etc. but often under pseudonym, such as Beka Bijou Orchestra! (In fact I believe I have one of these!!) By strange coincidence I found two 12 - inch Tower in the local Salvation Army Charity shop last year. Their last visit to the studio was c.1924. In the latter years more modern dance tunes appeared by them such as "Hindustan", "Indianola", "Salome" (by Stolz), "In my Harem" (Berlin).

Others listed are The Blue Five and The Maskeraders (Who were from the Band of the British 8th Armoured Brigade 1945/46), Henk Bruyns, Toni Fluss, Jupp Gimbel, Gilbert Goose, and Omar Lamparter. Effectively, this volume is the discographies of Marek Weber and Giorgi Vintilescu - two very important musicians. Nowhere else can their details be found so enthusiasts / collectors of "Light Music" at least should purchase this. Of course, it will be very useful to all those collectors interested in recording - dates and the history of recording. Being so clearly laid out it is easy to use. I recommend it most highly.

ERNIE BAYLY.



Inspired by the famous Victor advertisement of 1913, *Definitive Transfers of Hartford, Connecticut, USA* have produced a compilation of each of the 25 singers portrayed. Side 1:

1: Victor 88054 Meyerbeer - *L'Africana, O Paradiso*, by Caruso. A magnificent aria beautifully sung his voice emerges from the background, indeed it is freed from what surface noise the Victor recording process made, it has but improved it.. We listen to a voice freed from the restraints of the 78s.

2: Victor 88188 Donizetti - *Lucrezia Borgia, Drinking Song*, by Schumann-Heink. This large yet agile voice sings this show-piece contralto aria to full effect. She plays with the rubato colatura with all the skill of a mistress of her art. Her *messa di voce* is magnificent, on one marvellously held note she trills with all the skill of a high soprano, the majestic two octave jump at the end is fabulous.

3: Victor 64223, A: Pessard-Weckerlin *Berere Lergere*, XVIII Century. B: Pessard *L'Adieu Du Matin*, both sung by Edward Clement who had a beautifully trained lyric tenor voice suitable to the 18th century music which he sings here. You sit back and luxuriate in the beautiful sound and technique which he produces with ease.

4: Victor 87193 Wolf-Ferrari - *I Gioilli Della Maddona, Seranata Raffaele* by Pasquale Amato. Nice to hear a well known instrumental piece sung by a master of Italian baritones. Smooth, penetrating, yet beautiful; the recording gives us a glimpse of the Golden Age.

5: Victor 88085 Bizet - *Carmen, Habenera* by Calve. Emma gives us a piece which she captured and made her own. The elusive heroine yielded herself to her art, this soprano who could sing with passion so convincingly as well as sexlessly, like the larks, in songs like 'Ma Lisette' of her native Aveyron.

6: Victor 88122 Bizet - *Carmen, Air de la Fleur* by Charles Dalmores. He serenades us with the flower song of Carmen. Any modern tenor would do well to listen and try to imitate him, to sing half as well as this smooth velvety voice, which has no stridency:

7: Victor 88296 Thomas - *Mignon, Polonaise* by Tetrazinni. The Magnificent Mistress of Coloratura. In this marvellous opera by Thomas the beautiful singing - which has all the precision of the difficult art of coloratura singing - is made to sound as easy as the warbling of birds..

8: Victor 88276 Wagner - *Die Walkure, Sigmund's Lieberslied* by Ricardo Martin. The famous Lieberslied is here sung with depth, passion, precision and warmth. Such beautiful singing to be proud of. I am sure Wagner would have approved of this recording as his aim was the most beautiful sound possible. Unfortunately most interpretations have degenerated into high class screaming.

9: Victor 87033 Verdi - *Il Trovatore, Stride La Vampa* by Louise Homer. The authoritative and precise singing of Louise Homer with her smooth transition from the lowest notes to the highest notes given without stridency, plus the coloratura which is cleanly done makes for a marvellous Azucena.

10: Victor 6038-B Bizet - *Carmen, Michaela's Aria*. The Michaela of Francis Alda shows the hall mark of her teacher Marchesi, (Madame Blanche's mother) the smooth effortless singing, clean seamless scales with shading, a touch of passion and the high notes gleaming as only Marchesi pupils could achieve; the notes are taken effortlessly with beautiful ease well suited to lyric roles.

11: Victor 88383 Verdi - *Ernani, Ernani Involami* by Frieda Hemple. A coloratura with the soft characteristic German sound, which I am sure carried to every part of the opera house, sung with out effort - the hallmark of good singing. Many modern sopranos would do well to listen to this example for inspiration.

12: Victor 74072 Handel - *Messiah, Why Do The nations So Furiously Rage?* by Herbert Witherspoon. This recording demonstrates that the bass voice does not have to be a dull, lifeless thing; here it is alive, bright and clean, not muddy as some modern singers. He shows us how to sing bass coloratura with the swift transition from one note to another in a manner rarely heard today.

13: Victor 87052 Wagner - *Die Gotterdammerung, Helie Wehr! Heilige Waffe!* by Johanna Gadske. This give us a glimpse of heroic Wagnerian singing, passionately but within the limits of safety, she does not 'go over the top' but stays within her compass.

Side Two:

1: Victor 88011 Gounod - *Romeo et Juliette, Valse Song* by Emma Eames. The lightness and vivacity of this piece, the precision of the coloratura, the high notes, the seamless runs, all add up to the unmistakable sound of Marchesi yet again. But, for sure, Eames also sang Tosca, Aida and the Countess in *Nozze di Figaro*, roles not normally associated with this class of voice. Well controlled, her neatness and precision are beautifully executed.

2: Victor mx. C.1954-1 Mozart - *Don Giovanni, Batti Batti* by Marcella Sembrich. Recorded in November 1904 by one of the generation of singers after Patti, Sembrich yet sings with the mastery of a great singer which she undoubtedly was. She was also a musician - pianist and violinist - with a great feeling for the human voice. In this master piece the firm yet voluptuous voice is in better shape than Patti's was at that time, singing the same piece, although I detect a slight flutter.

3: Victor 64164 Humperdinck - *Hansel und Gretel, Eine Hex's Steinhalt* by Otto Goritz. The baritone of Goritz sounds really menacing, it is so clean, in a piece so precise yet very entertaining. He premiered this opera at the Met in 1905. He also recorded for Odeon, Columbia (US), plus Edison and Pathe cylinders

4: Victor 87103 Bizet - *Carmen, Seguidilla* by Margarete Matzenauer. She makes a very seductive Carmen with her very rich and flirtatious voice.. Matzenauer is also to be found on G&T, HMV, Columbia, and Pathe recordings before 1912 when she signed exclusively for Victor, this one is from 1914.

5: Victor 824-B Leoncavallo - *Zaza, Buona Zaza, Del Mio Buon Tempo* by Titta Ruffo. I must admit that I do not know the opera Zaza. This is sung by Titta Ruffo and I enjoyed his clean, beautiful, big voice in this performance.

6: HMV VA-6 (from a Victor recording) Wolf-Ferrari - *I Gioilli Della Maddonna, Sono Un Demonio Buono* by G. Mario Sammarco. It was a refreshing change to hear Sammarco come over so cleanly. Even though here it is from a transcription of a transcription (from a Victor original to HMV VA.6 used here as the source for this tape), I assume that as Michael R Payer had to recourse to the VA, that the original Victor is extremely rare.

7: Victor 72474 Victor Herbert - *Natoma, Spring Song* by Alma Gluck. So pleasant to hear Alma Gluck singing something different, operatic in fact, so fresh sounding: like the Spring. The originator of the opera was Mary Garden with John McCormack.

8: Victor 87030 Puccini - *Madame Butterfly, Con Onor Muore (Finale Ultimo)* by Geraldine Farrar. The famous Butterfly of Farrar the beautiful singing actress in this final, tragic and passionate scene, one cannot but be moved by this portrayal recorded in 1909 just three years after her celebrated debut in the role at the Met with Caruso. She made the role her own with this beautiful passionate singing. Rarely, if ever, equalled.

9: Victor 89106 Godard - *Jocelyn, Angels Guard Thee* by John McCormack. Singing this lullaby superbly as only McCormack can with his beautifully controlled tenor voice. The transfer is again superb, with Kriesler on violin: 10: Victor 88029 Leon Cavallo - *I Pagliacci, The Prologue* by Antonio Scotti. The famous contemporary of Caruso, singing the prologue in his smooth, controlled voice. This is passionate music and is a vocal lesson to us all.

11: HMV ABHA-1 (from Victor) Donizetti - *Lucia Di Lammermoor, Dalle Stanze ...* by Marcel Journet. The smooth velvety voice of Journet singing this excellent piece from Lucia, I know the piece well and have to admit that it is not easy to keep this smooth sound and articulate the notes correctly. This is a good transfer of a beautiful voice.

12: Victor 88073 Bishop - *Lo Hear The Gentle Lark*, by Nellie Melba. Last but not least - the divine diva singing that flashy novelty of Sir Henry Bishop: *Lo! Hear The Gentle Lark*. This is again made to sound seemingly easy by this technically correct singer who, so they say, never sang out of tune. The Victor recording of this surpasses the HMV recording in technical qualities. It makes her beautiful silvery star-burst of a voice - the product of Pietro Cecchi rather than Mathilde Marchesi who gave it a final polish, and opened opportunities for Melba - sound as natural as is possible.

This cassette tape costs US\$30.00, which at existing rates of exchange may seem rather costly in this country, however, it is a bargain: the twenty five tracks work out at about only £1 each. If you could obtain the original Victor 78s, assuming that you could find immaculate copies, it would cost you well in excess of five times the price of this compilation. I do not think that you can put a true price on articles such as our musical heritage. Mr Payer has done an excellent job with the transfers and remastering, I understand that it is part of a series and this is an excellent starting point for the discerning collector or the beginner who has heard the names but not the voices. It would surely encourage further collecting; it stands as a beacon of an age of vocalism, lovelier than that of our own time. Any criticism, yes: the cassette insert card has so much useful information about each track that to squeeze it on to two pages the type size is very minuscule, being smaller than this. However the inclusion of a 15" x 22" poster compensates for this.

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